



# May 2026



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## Advertising & Copy Deadline

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

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

**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

Stephen Willy 2026 Washington State Champion.  
Photo credit: Ani Barua.

## Back Cover

Siana Razmov in the Girls Room at the 2025 National K-12 Championships in Spokane, Washington.  
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

## Submissions

Submissions of games (PGN format is preferable for games), stories, photos, art, and other **original** chess-related content are encouraged! Multiple submissions are acceptable; please indicate if material is non-exclusive. All submissions are subject to editing or revision. Send via U.S. Mail to: **Jeffrey Roland, NWC Editor**  
**1514 S. Longmont Ave.**  
**Boise, Idaho 83706-3732**  
or via e-mail to:  
[editor@nwchess.com](mailto:editor@nwchess.com)

## Subscriptions / Premium Memberships

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*Idaho residents see <https://idahochess.net/>*

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<b>Junior</b> <i>Age U/19 at expiration</i>	1 year	\$ 27.00
	2 years	\$ 50.00
<b>Scholastic</b>	6 months	\$ 16.00
	<b>Senior</b> <i>Age 65 or over</i>	1 year
<b>Additional Family Members</b> <i>Residing at same address</i>	3 years	\$ 70.00
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	2 years	\$ 20.00
<b>Tournament/Trial</b>	3 years	\$ 28.00
	1 month	\$ 14.00

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<b>Senior</b>	1 year	\$ 17.50
	<b>Additional Family Members</b>	1 year

## Non-Member Subscriptions

		Rate
<b>U.S. addresses</b>	1 year	\$ 33.00
	3 years	\$ 88.00
<b>Canada</b>	1 year	\$ 44.00
<b>Foreign</b>	1 year	\$ 66.00

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## News Flash!

### Josh Sinanan

**A** hearty congratulations to Elina Khudiyev, a third grader at Open Window School in Bellevue. She recently won fourth place in the Girls Under Ten division at the 2026 KCF All-Girls Nationals Championships in Chicago, Illinois, April 10-12, 2026, with five wins and one loss out of six games.

This year's All-Girls Nationals, the 21st edition, drew a record 601 participants.



*Elina Khudiyev (L) and David Heiser, the chief organizer of Chicago All-Girls Nationals. Photo courtesy of Renaissance Knights Chess Foundation.*



# Eastside Open



May 9-10, 2026

Hotel 116 Bellevue

625 116<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](mailto:washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com)

# Mother's Day Scholastic

## CHESS TOURNAMENT

MOTHER'S DAY SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026

HOTEL 116 BELLEVUE

625 116<sup>TH</sup> 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:

1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>: \$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/](http://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](mailto:WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com),  
206-769-3757

# A Conversation with FM Stephen Willy

Ken Lee

**A**t 16 years of age, FM Stephen Willy has packed a lot of chess and competition in his life. I sat down with Stephen recently to discuss how a blend of home schooling, a competitive streak and a particular mindset has helped him thrive in the world of chess and more.

**Ken:** When did you first start playing chess?

**Stephen:** I first started playing chess in 2017 when I was seven years old.

**Ken:** Who first taught you?

**Stephen:** My dad taught me the basic rules and then I started competing, on a whim, at the Chess4life quads.

**Ken:** How did you do in that first tournament?

**Stephen:** Honestly, I didn't know what I was doing, and I didn't perform very well. I stopped playing for one and a half years because it didn't appeal to me at that time.

**Ken:** Interesting. When did you play in your next tournament?

**Stephen:** I don't think I played again until I was almost nine. I had started homeschooling and it allowed me some

opportunity to renew interest in chess. I played in another quad and scored 1½ points.

Thinking about it, I think that modest score was just enough to keep me motivated.

**Ken:** How did you progress from that point on?

**Stephen:** I started doing some individual online chess studies. I was always competitive, and chess appealed to me for that reason. I participated in some other memory competitions like spelling bee and Bible bee. While they were fun, they did not offer me opportunity to compete consistently.

**Ken:** How often did you play back then?

**Stephen:** I would play the Chess4Life Friday quads as often as possible but then COVID hit. I started playing more online games for fun and online tournaments.

**Ken:** What were those years like for you?

**Stephen:** Since I was already in homeschool, I had a unique opportunity to use my time creatively.

I played WCF tournaments and started participating in some online out-of-state tournaments as well.

**Ken:** How did you progress during that time?

**Stephen:** I was steadily progressing in my online chess rating. One day in 2021 I played GM Varuzhan Akobian in blitz during his livestream session of STL chess club, and I beat him. That's when my parents sought coaching for me.

**Ken:** Did it feel logical to have an online chess coach during COVID?

**Stephen:** Yes. It didn't matter where they were from. I just wanted to work with someone who could help me with

my game.

**Ken:** Who was your first coach?

**Stephen:** I worked with GM Aleksandr Lenderman from New York for a bit.

**Ken:** What kind of advice did he give you during that time?

**Stephen:** He made me aware that I need to slow down considering that I played too many online blitz games. He was the one who encouraged me to compete in my first out of state chess tournament.

**Ken:** Where was that?

**Stephen:** My first out of state tournament was the National Open in Las Vegas in the summer of 2021. I signed up for Under 1500 section. I did very well in that tournament and had a huge boost to my ELO.

**Stephen:** Eventually, GM Lenderman introduced me to GM Giorgi Kacheishvili. I worked with him for three years.

**Ken:** What specific knowledge or psychological tips did he share with you that helped your game?

**Stephen:** With GM Kacheishvili it really was the first time that I understood what it meant to study chess with intention.

**Ken:** What do you specifically mean by that?

**Stephen:** When I was younger, I would play a lot of blitz and kind of have an open-ended way of studying.

But GM Kacheishvili would pick specific themes, and we would discuss them from both the white and black perspectives.

He would set up positions based upon specific things I needed to work on.



Then when we thought I was through understanding that individual theme, he would introduce me to more themes.

Over time, the effect was that I could recognize patterns and understand the game from both positions with precision.

**Ken:** How often did you meet?

**Stephen:** We would meet online maybe once or twice a week. But the thing about chess is that it has a way of seeping into your consciousness so much so that you are studying it even when you are relaxing.

**Ken:** What do you mean by that?

**Stephen:** When someone gives me a particular chess problem to think about, I often work on those problems when I'm walking around my house.

I can visualize the position in my head. I think a lot of my gains in chess come because I have the time, flexibility, and interest to think about chess a lot.

**Ken:** How do you balance chess and academics?

**Stephen:** To be honest, it used to be 60% chess and 40% academics. Now that I'm getting older, I think it's reversed to 60% academics and 40% chess.

**Ken:** How have you overcome setbacks in your chess career?

**Stephen:** There have been a few times when I've had a very rough tournament or a very dry spell, and I think I'm just going to quit.

**Ken:** What did you do about it?

**Stephen:** I learned not to ignore my bad experiences but rather reframe them in a way that is useful to me.

**Ken:** Can you amplify on that please?

**Stephen:** Instead of trying to forget my past poor performances, I reflect on them and use them to push me forward.

I say to myself: "Hey, I'm still standing. I made it past that experience, and I can go on."

**Ken:** That's amazing. Usually, the phrase, "I'm still standing" is supposed to be a message of survival for older folks. Somehow you have figured out how to utilize this mantra, at a very young age, to keep you going and competing in very high stakes situations.

**Stephen:** Yes, I know that chess tournaments can mean big opportunities

for rating boosts. Or they could mean winning prize money. It's a lot of pressure.

**Ken:** Do you think chess has helped you become a stronger individual?

**Stephen:** I think chess helps me train my mind to be resilient. Of course, it's stressful sometimes. But I remind myself that I chose to be in these situations and that being purposeful is helpful for my game and my life as well.

**Ken:** Do you see chess as a viable career?

**Stephen:** I can see myself coaching but I really don't know if chess is going to be my primary career. I do see it being a part of my life for a long time.

**Ken:** How have international chess tournaments changed you or your game?

**Stephen:** International tournaments allow me to play against players with different style than in the US. I also enjoy engaging with players coming to those places. One of my favorite memories from a recent international trip was the 2025 Zupanja Open blitz tournament in Croatia.

**Ken:** Who is your current chess coach?

**Stephen:** I'm currently working with GM Aleksander Delchev from Bulgaria. I knew Coach Delchev when he organized hybrid tournaments during COVID time. He had made a few positive comments about my games and when we decided to play in Europe, we reached out to him to help with planning and preparation. We connected right away, and it continues even now.

**Ken:** Please describe your studies with Coach Delchev.

**Stephen:** He is pushing me to go way beyond "trick chess" where I would learn a gambit or something that works a few times.

When we study openings now, the emphasis is not so much about the moves

or strict memorization but the IDEAS behind the moves.

It's an entirely different level of chess study.

**Ken:** That's amazing. What are your current chess goals?

**Stephen:** I'd like to get the IM title and keep progressing forward.

**Ken:** What advice do you have for younger chess players?

**Stephen:** My first piece of advice is that if you want to improve, it's important to be very passionate about chess. You have to enjoy the process.

My second piece of advice is to not let results overwhelm you. Of course, people want to do well. But chess is a difficult sport. If you start caring too much about results, then you can get discouraged when you lose.

Finally, my last piece of advice to young chess players is to view chess outside the box.

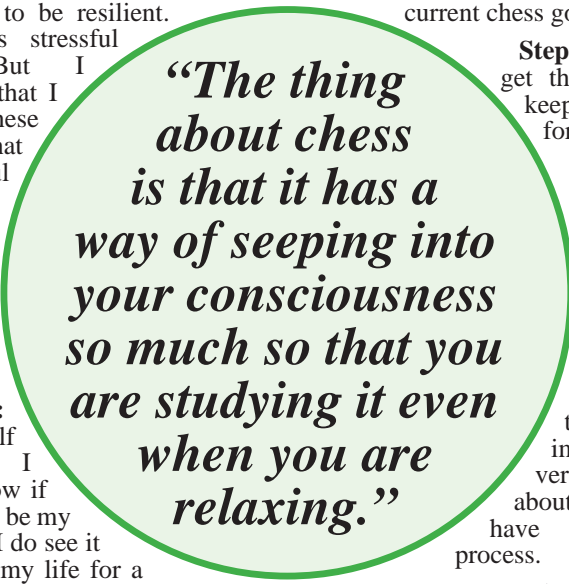
**Ken:** What do you mean by that?

**Stephen:** Chess, for the most part, is an individual sport. People often incorrectly assume that chess doesn't encourage socialization or friendships. I can tell you that I've met hundreds of players from around the world and now they are a part of my community.

**Ken:** Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Stephen:** I believe my faith has given me the skills and the passion for chess. I give back to the community by connecting with people and helping them improve their chess. I'm doing some volunteer work at the Sammamish Library where I teach kids chess basics. As another example, through chess, I got to meet you! I've been reading your articles for some time and now we are meeting!

**Ken:** It's been a pleasure, Stephen. Check and mate.



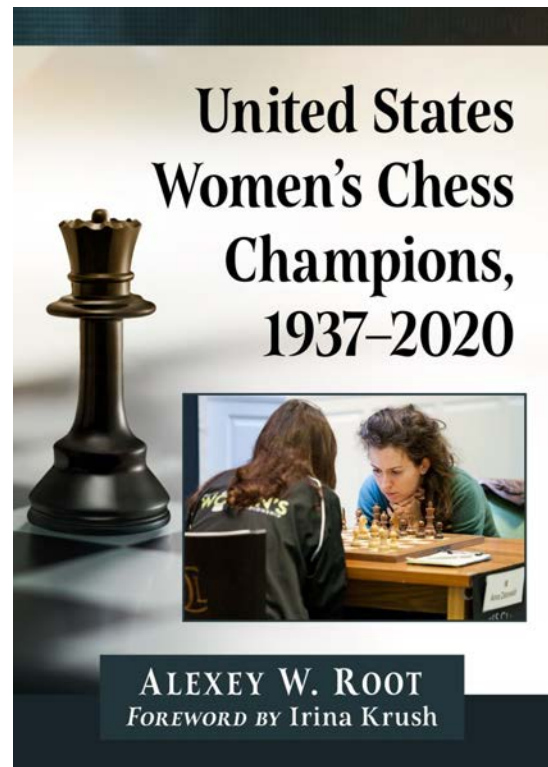


**Former Washington Women's Chess Champion and U.S. Women's Chess Champion Dr. Alexey Root will sign copies of *United States Women's Chess Champions, 1937-2020*, available at the site for \$50. After giving a short talk, she will play 10 players simultaneously. To secure a spot in the simul, be one of the first 10 people to register and pay \$60 (\$50 for the book + \$10 for the simul). Pay with Zelle (Tag: wa-chess, ID: washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com) or SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation). Pizza and refreshments provided.**

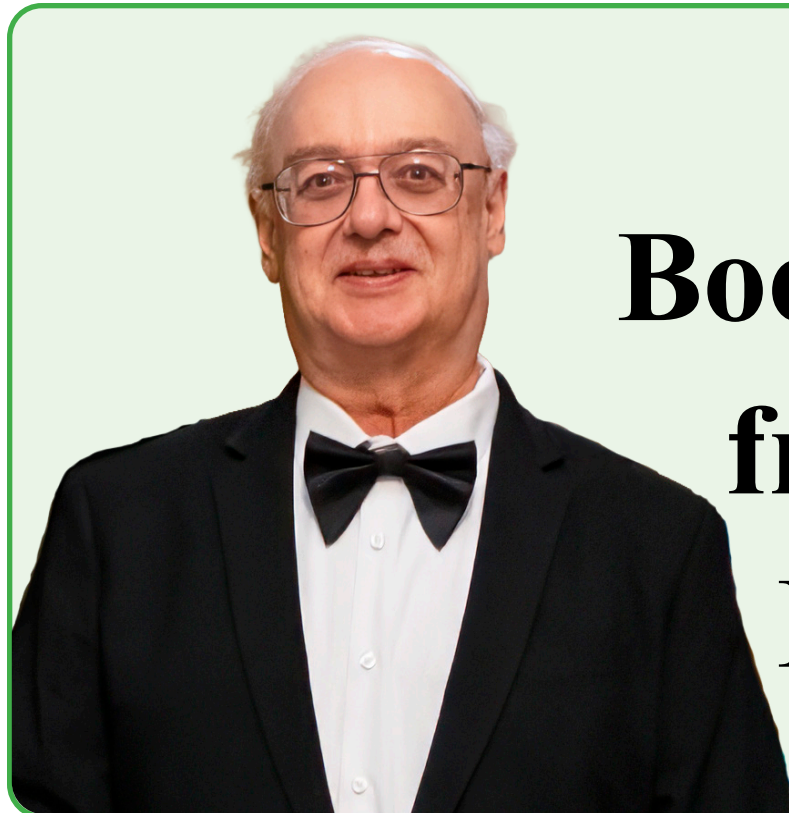


Alexey Root has a Ph.D. in education from UCLA and is a lecturer at The University of Texas at Dallas, teaching education courses that explore the uses of chess. She was the U.S. Women's Champion in 1989. Copies of *United States Women's Champions, 1937-2020* will be for sale at the event.

This photo of Dr. Root is by Crystal Fuller and is courtesy of the Saint Louis Chess Club.



**Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 6:00 p.m.**  
Grand Knights Chess Academy  
**13620 NE 20th St., Suite K, Bellevue, WA 98005**



# A Book Review from our Publisher!

Duane Polich

**I**nside the *Mind of Bobby Fischer*, published by Siles Press, a division of Silman-James Press Incorporated, and written by International Master John Donaldson (noted chess historian, author and 15 times captain of the U.S. Men's Olympiad Chess Team) is 402 pages chocked full of chess goodness, insights, tidbits and historical nuggets. By revisiting the writings and annotations of Fischer; 11th World Chess champion and the only U.S. born person to achieve that distinction, Donaldson packs 21 chapters into the book, covering the most influential American chess player ever. His games,

starting with the "Game of the Century" against Donald Byrne, and 116 more with analysis and key diagrams. J.D. adds his own notes to many of the games aided by the hindsight of Stockfish 17. Donaldson also dives into the thinking mind of Fischer, his analytical methods and move calculations before the age of computers.

Donaldson doesn't overlook the writings of Bobby, with numerous books, including *My 60 Memorable Games* (many of the games are reprinted in the book), his works for *American Chess Quarterly*, *Chess Life*, and *Boy's*

*Life* magazines. Bobby wrote an article for *Chessworld* titled "The Ten Greatest Masters in History," which caused a stir by leaving off Emanuel Lasker and Mikhail Botvinnik from the list.

There are numerous historical exhibits courtesy of the World Chess Hall of Fame, including a reprint of a postcard from Fischer to his mommy, lamenting his loss to Tal (in the 1959 Candidates tournament), "that after ten moves I had a forced winning position which I had previously studied." John even includes some odds and ends about Fischer, covering "The Wade Files"

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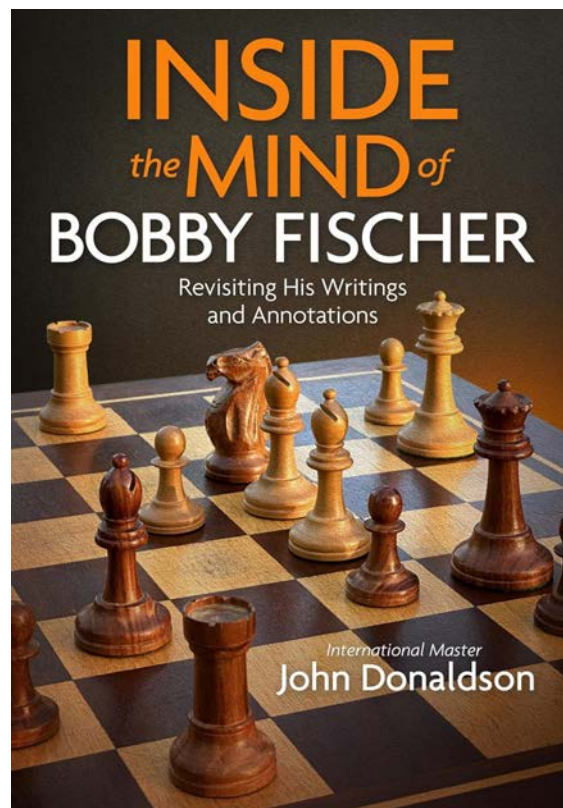
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named after the English international master, who helped Fischer prepare for the World Championship Cycle, as well as notes from interviews that Bobby did with GM Lubomir Kavalek, in which we find out Bobby's taste in music included soul groups like the Four Tops, The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, and the Supremes, as well as Bob Dylan and the Beatles, among other things. All in all, a well-researched book that complements John's three other books on Fischer.

John tops everything off with a player game index, an ECO index, and an opening index. It's a great book to help you with your chess studies, and a great addition to your chess book collection.

Click on the image to the right for a link to the book on Amazon.com.



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## SEATTLE UNIVERSITY CHESS CLUB **CHESS CLASSIC**

**SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026**

**SEATTLE UNIVERSITY- 901 12<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, SEATTLE, WA 98122**

**Format:** An Open Swiss chess tournament in three sections:

- **Championship:** A 4-round, G/50; +10 USCF rated Swiss open to players rated 1600+ USCF. Rounds: 9am, 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5pm. Entry Fee: \$55. \$35 play-up fee if rated 1400-1599 USCF. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, and WIMs.
- **Premier U1600:** A 4-round, G/50; +10 USCF rated Swiss open to players rated U1600 USCF. Rounds: 9am, 11:30am, 2:30pm, 5pm. Entry Fee: \$55.
- **Casual (18+):** A 5-round, G/25; +5 unrated Swiss open to players from unrated to 1000 USCF. Rounds: 9am, 10:30am, 12:30pm, 2pm, 3:30pm. Entry Fee: \$25. Free entry for Seattle University students.
- **Registration:** [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration)

# Detective Cookie's

## CHESS CLASSIC

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

RAINIER BEACH COMMUNITY CENTER

8825 RAINIER AVE S, SEATTLE, WA 98118



Seattle  
Parks & Recreation



### 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's 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](http://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.

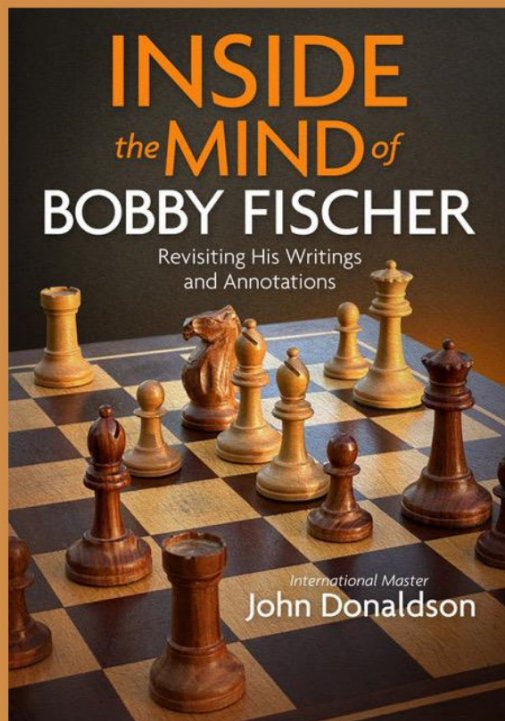
### Questions?

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

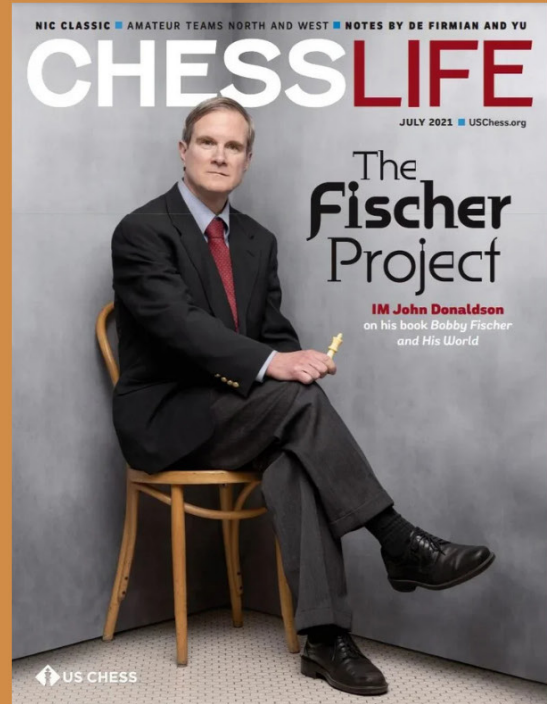
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# WASHINGTON OPEN

Sat-Mon, May 23-25 2026

Redmond Marriott

7401 164<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052

**\$15,000 Prize Fund**  
(based on 200 paid entries)

## Main Event:

**Format:** A 6-round Swiss across 4 sections: Elite (1800+), Premier (U1800), Rising (U1500), and Dynamos (U1200).

### Time Controls:

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

### Schedule:

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

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

**Entry Fee:** \$150 by Sun, 04/26; \$165 by Sun, 05/10; and \$180 after 05/10 or on-site. Less \$50 for Seniors (age 50+). Playing up one section is allowed (for \$80 extra) if the player's *USCF Regular OTB rating* is within 100 points of the section's lower limit (i.e., min 1700 for Elite, min 1400 for Premier, min 1100 for Rising). Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs, and USCF 2400+. Re-entry for ½ of original entry fee. Canadians may pay CAD\$ at par.

**Rating:** Dual rated (USCF & NWSRS), plus Elite, Premier, and Rising sections are FIDE rated too (except G/55 games). Higher of May 2026 USCF and current NWSRS ratings used to determine sections, pairings, and prizes. Higher of USCF and CFC ratings used for Canadian players. Other foreign ratings used for players with no USCF rating, or at TD discretion. Elite, Premier, and Rising sections are paired by USCF rating; Dynamos section is paired by NWSRS rating.

### Registration, Information & Payments:

- **Before event:** Online (by Thu, 05/21 @ 5 PM) at [NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/](http://NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/) – pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation) or Zelle (ID: [WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com](mailto:WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), Tag: wa-chess), or write a check (payable to WCF; mail to: Josh Sinanan, 4174 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond, WA 98052). Info: [WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com](mailto:WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com), 206-769-3757
- **On-site** (cash possible too): Sat, 05/23 @ 8-9 AM for 3-day schedule, or 4:30-5 PM if entering with 1 half-point bye. Sun, 05/24 @ 8-8:30 AM for 2-day schedule, or 9-9:30 AM if entering 3-day schedule with 2 half-point byes. Late registrations may receive a half-point bye for round 1. Max 2 half-point byes available; request before the end of round 2.

### Hotel Info:

Redmond Marriott, \$133-\$143/night + tax. One King / Queen / Double or two Queens, single or double occupancy. Call (425) 498-4000 to request the WA Chess Federation block, or use the [online reservation](#). Group code: CFCOFCOR. Cut-off date for discounts: Fri, Apr 24, 2026.

### Prizes:

- **Elite (1800+):** \$1100, \$900, \$750, \$600, \$450, \$350, \$250; U2100: \$225, \$200; U1900: \$225, \$200
- **Premier (U1800):** \$600, \$450, \$350, \$300, \$250, \$225; U1600: \$200, \$175
- **Rising (U1500):** \$450, \$350, \$300, \$250, \$225, \$200; U1300: \$175, \$150
- **Dynamos (U1200):** \$350, \$300, \$250, \$225, \$200, \$175; U1000: \$175, \$150; Unrated: \$175, \$150

**Championship Seeds:** Highest finishing Washington resident in the Elite and Premier section is seeded into the 2027 Washington State Championship, in the Championship and Challengers section, respectively. Ties for such a seed will be resolved by post-event playoff games.

**Mixed Doubles Prizes:** Best mixed gender (incl. male-female) 2-player team's combined score: 1<sup>st</sup> \$220, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$170, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$110. Average team rating must be under 2000; may play in different sections. Register (no extra fee) before round 3. May win a Mixed Doubles prize in addition to other prizes.

### Special Prizes (per section):

- **Best Female Player\*:** \$75. Requires min 3 eligible players.
- **Best Senior Player\* (age 50+):** \$75. Requires min 3 eligible players.
- **Highest (USCF) Rating Gain\*:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$60, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30. Requires an established (non-provisional) rating. May not be combined with Biggest Upset Win.
- **Biggest Upset Win (per round):** \$30. Max one per player.
- **Fair-Play, Kindness, Spreading Joy:** \$30. Please nominate.
- **Best Dressed (per day):** \$25. Max one per player.
- **Best Annotated Game:** 1<sup>st</sup> \$75, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$50, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$25. Submit one annotated game that you consider to be interesting and/or well-played. A panel of judges will select winners.

**Note:** \* = May not be combined with equal or higher prizes.

### Memberships / Procedures / Miscellaneous:

Current US Chess and WCF / OCF / ICA memberships required; other states accepted. Memberships may be paid at the time of registration. Please bring a digital clock, if available. Wheelchair accessible play area. Pairings posted near the play area and online ~20 mins before each round. If withdrawing or skipping a round, please inform the organizers at least 30 mins before the start of the round.

# WASHINGTON OPEN, May 23-25 (cont.)

## Fun Side Events!

(many run between rounds of the Main Event)

### Washington Open Faustino Oro Scholastic

Sat, 05/23 @ 9 AM – 4 PM (during round 1)

**Eligibility:** Open to students in grades K-12. Out-of-state players welcome!  
**Format:** Classical and Rapid sections:

- **Classical sections:** A 4-round G/40; +5 Swiss in two sections: **K-3 Open** and **4-12 Open**. For intermediate to advanced players. Dual NWSRS and USCF rated. US Chess membership req'd. Clocks and notation req'd. Rounds: 9:15 AM, 10:45 AM, lunch, 12:45 PM, 2:15 PM. Awards: ~4 PM.
- **Rapid sections:** A 5-round G/25; +5 Swiss in two sections: **K-3 U800** and **4-12 U900**. For novice to low intermediate players. Dual NWSRS and USCF rated. US Chess membership req'd. Clocks req'd. Notation req'd in 4-12 U900, but optional in K-3 U800. Rounds: 9:15 AM, 10:30 AM, lunch, 12 PM, 1:15 PM, 2:30 PM. Awards: ~4 PM.

**Entry fee:** \$55 if registered by Sat, 05/16; \$65 after. Room for 132 players.  
**Awards (per section):**

- Overall prizes (in Amazon e-gift cards): 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>: \$70 / \$65 / \$60 / \$55 / \$50.
  - Special prizes: Medals for first-timers and for biggest upset win.
  - Top performer (by TPR) in K-3 Open and 4-12 Open wins free entry into the 2-day option of 2026 Washington Open (Main Event) (see prev. page).
- Rating:** Higher of May 2026 USCF or current NWSRS ratings used for sections & pairings.

**Registration:** 100% pre-registered ([NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/](http://NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/)) – pay by SettleKing, Zelle, or check (see above page for details) due by **Fri, 05/22 @ 5 PM**; no on-site entries or payments. Unpaid players will be withdrawn.

### Washington Open Gary Dorfner Memorial Adult Novice Swiss

Sat, 05/23 @ 11 AM – 4 PM (during round 1)

A 4-Round Swiss in one section. 1 half-point bye available. For U1200 or unrated adults (18+). No memberships req'd. Unrated. TC: G/30; +5. EF: \$25. Registration: 10:30-10:50 AM. Rounds: 11 AM, 12:15, 1:30, and 2:45 PM. Prize fund: \$400/b20. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>: \$150 / \$100 / \$60, 1<sup>st</sup> U1000 / U700 / Unr \$30.

### Washington Open Fischer Chess960 Rapid

Sat, 05/23 @ 2:10 PM – 4:50 PM (between rounds 1 & 2)

A 4-Round Swiss in one section, 1 half-point bye available. Unrated. TC: G/12; +3. EF: \$20. No memberships req'd. Registration: 1:30-2 PM. Rounds: 2:10 PM, 2:50, 3:30, and 4:10 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF and current NWSRS ratings used for pairings & prizes. Rules: A randomized new opening position explored in each round. Players have 2 minutes before clocks start to examine that opening position. Prize fund: \$300/b20. 1<sup>st</sup> \$80, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$60, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$40, 1<sup>st</sup> U2000 / U1700 / U1400 / Unrated \$30.

### Washington Open Jiner Chess Workshop for Girls & Women

Sat, 05/23 @ 4:30 PM-5 PM and 6 PM-7:30 PM (before & during round 2)

A workshop led by WFM Chouchan Airapetian ([chornyaa@msn.com](mailto:chornyaa@msn.com), 206-799-6087), experienced chess coach, organizer, and promoter, former US Women's Championship contender, WCF Girls' and Women's Chess Director. Registration: 4-4:30 PM. EF: Free! Schedule:

4:30-5 PM: "How to develop & cultivate girls' and women's chess" + Q&A.

6-7:30 PM: Complimentary pizza & refreshments, and ladies' bughouse.

### Washington Open Evening with IM John Donaldson

Sat, 05/23 @ 5 PM – 5:45+ PM (between rounds 1 & 2)

Led by IM John Donaldson, former coach of the US Olympic Team, former WA State Champion, chess author and historian. EF: Free! Schedule:

5-5:30 PM: Presentation based on a new book about Bobby Fischer.

5:30-5:45 PM: Q&A.

5:45+ PM: Book signing.

### Washington Open 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss

Sun-Mon, 05/24-25 @ 11 AM and 4:30 PM (during rounds 3-6)

Sponsored by *Seattle Chess Club (SCC)*, with generous support from *Henry Yan*. Format: A 4-round Swiss in two sections: Botvinnik (1500+) and

Korchnoi (U1500); may be merged if small. 1 half-point bye available. USCF rated only. TC: G/120; +30. EF: \$50 online (by Sat, 05/23 @ 5 PM) or \$60 on-site; less \$10 for SCC members. EF waived for unrated players who purchase memberships. Registration: Sun, 05/24 @ 10-10:30 AM (unless starting with a half-point bye). US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA memberships req'd. May 2026 USCF rating used for sections, pairings, & prizes. Guaranteed prize fund: \$1,000.

Botvinnik: 1<sup>st</sup> \$240, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$150, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$120, 1<sup>st</sup> U1650 \$80.

Korchnoi: 1<sup>st</sup> \$120, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$100, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$80, 1<sup>st</sup> U1300 \$60, 1<sup>st</sup> Unrated \$50.

### Washington Open Talk by IM John Donaldson

Sun, 05/24 @ 1 PM – 1:50 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

Led by IM John Donaldson, former coach of the US Olympic Team, former WA State Champion, chess author and historian. EF: Free! Topic: "The History of the Washington State Chess Championship."

### Washington Open Carlsen Rapid

Sun, 05/24 @ 2 PM – 5:40 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

A 5-Round Swiss in two sections: Kasparov (1600+) and Anand (U1600); may be merged if small. 2 half-point byes available. USCF Quick rated; Kasparov section is FIDE Rapid rated too. TC: G/15; +5. EF: \$35 online (by Sat, 05/23 @ 5 PM) or \$40 on-site. Players rated 1500+ may play up into Kasparov (\$10 fee). Current US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA membership req'd. Registration: 1-1:45 PM. Rounds: 2 PM, 2:45, 3:30, 4:15, and 5 PM. Highest of May 2026 USCF Quick and current NWSRS rating used for sections, pairings, & prizes. Prize fund: \$1,000/b30.

Kasparov (1600+): 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> \$150 / \$110 / \$80; 1<sup>st</sup> U2100 / U1900 / U1700 \$60; Anand: 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> \$100 / \$80 / \$60; 1<sup>st</sup> U1400 / U1200 / U1000 / Unrated \$40; Biggest Upset Win: \$25 and Best Sportsmanship: \$20 (in each section).

### Washington Open Awonder Liang Bughouse

Sun, 05/24 @ 3 PM – 4:15 PM (between rounds 3 & 4)

A 7-round Single Swiss in one section. 2 half-point byes available. Max avg team rating: 1800. Unrated. TC: G/3; +0. EF: \$20/player. No memberships. Register: 2:15-2:45 PM. Rounds: 3 PM, 3:10, 3:20, 3:30, 3:40, 3:50, 4 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF Blitz and current NWSRS ratings (if unrated, up to 1300, based on age) used for pairings & prizes. Team prizes: \$400 (based on 20 teams): 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>: \$100 / \$70 / \$50; 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> K-6: \$50 / \$40 / \$30; Biggest Upset Win: \$30; Best Sportsmanship: \$20.

### Washington Open Casablanca Chess Rapid

Mon, 05/25 @ 2 PM – 3:45 PM (between rounds 5 & 6)

A 4-round Swiss in one section. 1 half-point bye available, if requested by end of round 2. Unrated. TC: G/8; +3. EF: \$20. No memberships req'd. Registration: online (by Sun, 05/24) or on-site (Mon @ 1-1:45 PM). Rounds: 2 PM, 2:25, 2:50, and 3:15 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF and current NWSRS ratings used for pairings & prizes.

Rules: Each round starts in a new *midlegame* position from a historical game. Players have 2 mins before clocks start to examine initial positions. Prize fund: \$400/b20. 1<sup>st</sup> \$100, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$80, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$60, 1<sup>st</sup> U2100 \$50, 1<sup>st</sup> U1800 \$40, 1<sup>st</sup> U1500 \$30, Biggest Upset Win: \$20.

### Washington Open Ignacio Perez Memorial Blitz

Mon, 05/25 @ 8 PM – 10:30 PM (after round 6)

A 10-round Swiss in two sections: Nakamura (1600+) and Tal (U1600); may be merged if small. 3 half-point byes available. USCF Blitz rated; Nakamura section is FIDE Blitz rated too. TC: G/3; +2. EF: \$30 online (by Sun, 05/24 @ 5 PM) or \$35 on-site. Players rated 1500+ may play up into Nakamura (\$10 fee). Current US Chess membership and WCF/OCF/ICA membership req'd. Registration: 7:30-7:50 PM. Rounds: 8 PM, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, 10, and 10:15 PM. Higher of May 2026 USCF Blitz and current NWSRS ratings used for sections, pairings, & prizes. Prize fund: \$850/b30.

Nakamura: 1<sup>st</sup> \$120, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$100, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$80, 1<sup>st</sup> U2100 / U1900 / U1700 \$60; Tal: 1<sup>st</sup> \$90, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$75, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$60, 1<sup>st</sup> U1400 / U1200 / U1000 \$40, 1<sup>st</sup> Unr. \$30.

# Travel Time: Reykjavík Edition!

## The Chess Friends

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

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



*The full Chess Friends Crew with our illustrator and The Man Benji's Mom Sasha (left) and our editor and The Myth Sarang and The Legend Vivaan's Dad Siva (right). Photo credit: Tómas Tandri Jóhannsson*

Howdy! It's The Chess Friends!

If you read our blog, [chessfriendsbooks.com/blog](http://chessfriendsbooks.com/blog), you've probably read our article, [Eyes on Iceland!](#) from March 19th. That was no coincidence! With our families, we all traveled to Iceland to compete in the nine-round, seven-day 2026 Reykjavik Open, at the beautiful Harpa Concert Hall in downtown Reykjavik, an adventure we will never forget! By our count, 11 brave Pacific Northwest players competed in the strong 422-player field at the tournament.



This photo of the Harpa building was taken by the event's photographer, Tómas Tandri Jóhannsson. Icelandic Chess Federation (or Skáksamband Islands) graciously allowed us to use [the event photos](#) to write about our experiences, so huge shoutout to them. One of our favorite and one of the most viewed photos of the entire event (well, after the photos of legendary GM Vasyl Ivanchuk, because he is the GOAT!) was this one (see photo on the article title page to the left):

Folks loved our hoodies as well as our crazy-looking hair! We kind of felt like celebrities! See the person behind taking another photo?! Wow. We promoted our blog, shared many bookmarks and stickers, and had tons of lovely conversations. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. First, let's introduce the tournament!

To give you a bit of history, the very first Reykjavik Open, won by the legend GM Mikhail Tal, was held in the year of 1964. At that time, it was a closed event held biannually, but then converted to an open format running on a yearly basis. Over the years, the tournament grew in size, and featured many famous super GMs. For example, Vasily Smyslov won the event in 1974; Seattle legend Yasser Seirawan was a co-champ in 1990; Levon Aronian, also co-champ, won in 2004; Fabiano Caruana

in 2012; Anish Giri in 2017; Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu in 2022; and last year in 2025, Parham Maghsoodloo. Icelandic chess legends, Hannes Hlifur Stefánsson and Friðrik Ólafsson won Reykjavik Open titles many times too!

This year, in its 39<sup>th</sup> edition, the Reykjavik Open was held from March 25<sup>th</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. Some favorites were GM M. Amin Tabatabaei from Iran; GM Bogdan Daniel Deac from Romania; GM Vasyl Ivanchuk from Ukraine; GM Maxime Lagarde from France; GM Aryan Tari from Norway, and Benjamin Frederick, Sarang Sankrithi, and Vivaan Sankrithi, all from the USA! OK, just kidding about the last three! In the end, M. Amin Tabatabaei, after seven wins in a row and two draws,

Title	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Score	Place
GM	Bryce Tiglon	1 ½	1	0	1 ½	1	1 ½				<b>6.5</b>	16
CM	Nikash Vemparala	1	0	1	0 ½	1	0	1	1		<b>5.5</b>	85
CM	Neeraj Harish	0	1 ½	1	0	1	1	0	1		<b>5.5</b>	87
FM	Stephen Willy	½	½	1	1 ½	0	1	0	1		<b>5.5</b>	107
WGM	Zoey Tang	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	<b>5</b>	113
	Isaac Vega	1 ½	0 ½	½	½	½	0	1	1		<b>5</b>	153
	Benjamin Frederick	0	1 ½	0	0	1 ½	½	½	1		<b>4.5</b>	207
AFM	Sridhar Seshadri	0	1	0 ½	0	1	0	0	1		<b>3.5</b>	322
ACM	Siva Sankrithi	0 ½	½	½	0 ½	0	1	½			<b>3.5</b>	348
AFM	Sarang Athreya Sankrithi	1	0	0	0 ½	½	½	½	0		<b>3</b>	360
AFM	Vivaan Krishna Sankrithi	0 ½	0 ½	½	½	0	0	½			<b>2.5</b>	402

was crowned the tournament winner! Congratulations to him!

Also, congratulations to everyone from the Pacific Northwest who played in this tournament! We all deserve a shoutout, but Sridhar Seshadri especially, who, having participated in the event many times before, provided lots of reassurance and support to us all, and whose Sri Chess Academy sponsored pens for all 422 participants!

From the PNW, 11 of us cheered each other on, while hoping we wouldn't get paired against one another (it didn't happen, phew!). Here's a summary of how we all did round by round, compiled via [Chess-Results.com](http://Chess-Results.com):

As you can see from the table above, Bryce, Nikash, and Neeraj all finished in the top 100, an outstanding achievement given the field that featured over 120 titled players! Bravo! Here are notable results from some of our PNW players, "overperforming" their rating. There were many more but we picked one each to highlight.

Zoey won against GM Leon Livaic (2571) from Croatia!

Stephen drew IM Zhandos Agmanov (2463) from Kazakhstan!

Isaac won against Snorri Vikanes Bjarnason (1988) from Norway!

The Man Benji won against Shardul Paricharak (1895) from Netherlands Antilles!

The Myth Sarang won against Luigi Ardu (1804) from Italy!

The Legend Vivaan drew Emil Jacobsen Jamil (1769) from the Faroe Islands!

Siva drew Michael Schimmer (1797) from Germany!

Sridhar drew Runar Isleifsson (1860) from Iceland!



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The amazing thing about the tournament is that there were people representing 51 different countries/territories! In fact, the three of us Chess Friends played players from 15 different countries/territories during the event, which is almost 30% of the countries/territories in the tournament! In this article, we would like to reflect on our trip and share with you the vibes of the event, where the global chess community got together in a beautiful country to become part of chess history! We'll also share some information about Reykjavík and next year's event, in the hopes that you too could enjoy the wonder of chess and Iceland!

## The Man Benji

### *What were your expectations before the trip?*

The Reykjavík Open was a chess tournament I was dreaming about for a few years, but I thought I wasn't strong just yet to enter the field of international players. This year, after playing in the highest sections of the Oregon Open and North American Open, I felt ready to compete among top-level players. It would be my first international tournament, in a country I had never been to before, and I was excited to learn about chess and Iceland, and do my best, with friends by my side!

### *What things didn't you expect coming to Iceland?*

Before this trip, I knew Iceland was a cold country, but, oh boy, I didn't expect it to be that cold in March! When we were leaving Seattle, spring had already sprung, the trees were in full bloom, and it felt silly to wear a heavy coat and boots on the plane. When we landed in Keflavík airport, on an early morning, there was snow on the ground and a snowstorm on the forecast! Good thing I packed my alpaca socks! I love the snow and being in the cold, but I had to remember why I was there and focus on chess. I also didn't expect that Icelandic water could taste so refreshing! You can literally refill your water bottle from the sink in the bathroom! How cool is that? *Pro-tip:* In Iceland, bathrooms are even called Water Closets, abbreviated WC, like World Champion!

### *What were highlights of your trip?*

Many chess players would agree with me that one of the most important things to have during a long chess tournament is ... good food! The food in Iceland was exceptional! I loved trying pizzas from different restaurants (Padre's pizza, Rossopomodoro, and BakaBaka) and other food from local grocery stores. Icelandic yogurt, called skyr, and milk, called mjólk, are the best!

Walking around the city, and along the water, was out of this world! That feeling, when you step outside, the sudden cold air surrounding you, and crispy snow crunching under your feet makes you want to walk for miles! I remember how before round two, early in the morning, the weather status had a Yellow Warning, meaning severe snow and wind. I stayed at a hotel about a ten-minute walk from Harpa, and it was a unique experience getting to the playing site while battling the weather, walking in a snowstorm with strong gusts of wind and snow blowing into your face, making your skin tingle.

But the biggest highlight was sharing this all with my friends, spending time at the [Hafnartorg Gallery](#) food court—pizza, pasta, burgers, tacos, sushi, all you can ask for—never mind a win, draw or loss, still having fun. Those moments together made the trip an unforgettable event!

### *What did you learn about Iceland?*

During the tournament, on days when we had only one game in the evening, we usually had time to walk around Reykjavík and explore its museums to learn about the country. In [Perlan Museum](#), I learned about volcanic activity, ice caves, and the Northern Lights. In the [Settlement Exhibition](#) and the [World in Words](#) exhibit at the University Library, I learned about vikings and Ingólfur Arnarson, who was the first settler of Reykjavík, a place covered in trees at that time! I also learned about sagas (old Icelandic manuscripts), and how life was back in the early days!

### *What are your chess reflections?*

The tournament felt like a festival. In a colorful building, where a large playing hall overlooked the bay, 200+ chessboards were set up, and over 400 players—strong amateurs to super grandmasters—from all over the world, met, played, and had fun. On and off the board, many stories were being unraveled, and I was happy to be part of it all. I met some nice people, made friends, and learned a lot about chess. In my nine rounds, I played people from nine different countries, like Australia, Germany, India, and even Netherlands Antilles! In my first round, I was paired up against a streamer from Australia, Hannah Sayce, who we even talked about in [one of our blogs](#)! I got to play on a DGT board, in front of a camera! Not gonna lie, it was a bit stressful at first. Before the round, I told Hannah about The Chess Friends blog, gave her our bookmark and Peshka stickers, and she was really nice!

### *Can you share one of your chess positions?*

In Round seven, I was paired up as Black against a player

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from France, Benjamin Spagnoli, so the game quickly became known as “The Battle of Benjamins.” I found myself facing the Scotch game, which is not the most common opening in classical. Nevertheless, I think I held pretty well, even entering the endgame two pawns up, but French Benjamin’s passed pawn was worth my two, and his pieces were more coordinated. I was on the defending side. When we reached move 41, I exhaled, having 15 extra minutes on the clock, but White was pressing. His c-pawn was dominating, and his rook was about to start munching my pawns. If I don’t find the right move, my position collapses.



How do I break the tension? The answer: Sacrifice THE ROOOOOK!

41... Rbxc6! (Rcxc6 also works)

42. Nxc6 Rxc6

Which side do you prefer here? Eventually, we traded all the pawns, and I had to hold a R+R vs R+N endgame, and, after almost 5 hours, the game ended in a draw. Perhaps as it should be, because, I mean, in a Battle of Benjamins, who do you root for?

## The Myth Sarang

### *What were your expectations before the trip?*

I had the pleasure of visiting Reykjavík briefly while returning home from the 2024 Paris Olympic games. Even then, it captured my heart as the best city in the world! When this opportunity presented itself to attend the Reykjavík Open, one of the most prestigious chess tournaments in the world, in my favorite city, I was ecstatic! Going into the event, I knew I was near the bottom of the field but also knew my capability. I was excited to prove myself.

### *What things didn’t you expect coming to Iceland?*

I didn’t expect it to be so cold in March, just like The Man Benji. For some reason, I wore four layers on the plane, which felt weird: a short sleeve shirt, a black hoodie, the Chess Friends hoodie and my blue jacket. Good thing I brought a bunch of Merino wool long-sleeve shirts, socks and underwear! I really recommend Merino wool if you are going to Iceland as it doesn’t get smelly and you can re-wear it and save space!

### *What were highlights of your trip?*

It was very nice meeting my Dad’s former student, my

friend, and the one who introduced me to my coach, GM Bryce Tignon. He gave me one of the greatest pieces of advice I will carry forward into my future chess games: ***There is no such thing as a drawn position.*** He explained to me that even in positions that are “dead drawn,” it is important to trust your training and push to find advantages and break through, as he did in several of his games this event. I also climbed the Þúfa hill together with Bryce and Dad in the wind, ice, and snow, to take in some incredible views of Reykjavík and share stories and insights. It was also lovely to spend lots of time with my Mom, Dad, and brother and take in the sights of a beautiful city.

### *What did you learn about Iceland?*

The food in Reykjavík is the best! So much variety! I recommend [Posthus food hall](#) feat. Yuzu, Funky Bhangra, Fukumama, and more, with different culinary twists at every restaurant. Ramen Momo, the first ever Ramen house in Iceland, was a great surprise, and super traditional. I highly recommend the yuja tea. Lastly, I would highly recommend [Gandhi](#), a lovely Indian restaurant with incredible paneer tikka masala and delectable onion pakoras. Overall, it was my favorite tournament experience and travel experience, and I can’t wait to return again for a future event!

### *What are your chess reflections?*

I ended up “playing up” all nine games this tournament, and scored a solid 3.0/9 with four draws and a win, along with four close losses. I felt I did a great job using my time and calculating deeply and thought more positionally than ever. Upon reflection, the moves I played too quickly were my biggest mistakes, giving opponents small advantages they converted well. I will improve on this. I was also pleased by my resilience, in that I was worse in many games and fought hard to come back and get a result.

### *Can you share one of your chess positions?*

This position came versus Luigi Ardu from Italy. Do you all see the plan for Black, aka me? ...fxe5, Rxc5 Qxc5 and Black is much better. This happened and Black converted the advantage for the win.



## The Legend Vivaan

### *What were your expectations before the trip?*

I am eight, and I knew I would be one of the youngest players in this edition of the Reykjavík Open. I am really into basketball right now, play every day, and was hoping to hoop, at least a little, while in Iceland.



### *What things didn't you expect coming to Iceland?*

The underground passages to get from place to place and avoid the crazy wind were a nice surprise. I like a blizzard as much as the next guy; in fact Blizzards is the name of my basketball team, but I'm not a super big guy yet, so the wind can push me pretty hard!

### *What were highlights of your trip?*

Perlan Museum was AMAZING! It's all about the wonders of Iceland, like ice caves, volcanoes, and aurora. I also loved that we got to sit courtside at a professional Icelandic basketball game, a crazy match between KR Reykjavík and Tindastóll! We also got to play on that court the day after. As you may know, I love basketball, and am a little crazy, like my dad, so we went out and hooped in snow multiple days as well! Fortunately, our bathroom floors were heated so we could dry our socks after!

### *What did you learn about Iceland?*

If you don't mind the snow, there are many lovely parks in Reykjavík, like Hallargarðurinn, which has the half-frozen Tjörnin pond where you can say hi to ducks and swans! There is also Klambtratún, which has a playground and was the main place I went to play snow basketball. If you're looking for some swimming but don't want to go all the way to the Blue Lagoon, try out [Laugardalslaug Pool](#), which has geothermally heated pools, beach volleyball, and basketball courts, plus the Reykjavík Zoo is right next door.

### *What are your chess reflections?*

I loved meeting people from all over the world and making new friends. It was super cool to watch many top players play as I was walking around, including Super GM champion Amin Tabatabaei, top 30 in the world!

### *Can you share one of your chess positions?*

Instead of highlighting my games, I want to give a shoutout to our WGM/IM Zoey Tang! In Round five, Zoey, playing White, faced GM Leon Livačić of Croatia, on one of the top DGT boards. In an equal endgame, under time pressure, Leon made a mistake. Zoey, also with little time on her clock, found a lively finish. Can you spot the winning plan for White?




55. Nd4 is crushing! The knight is having too much fun! The game proceeded

55... Rb2, 56. Nf5 Bxf5, 57. h7 and Black resigned. Note if Bxh7, White has Rh6#!

Are you imagining yourself at next year's Reykjavík Open? We hope so! The dates are already set: March 17<sup>th</sup> to March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2027! It will be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Follow the website <https://www.reykjavikopen.com>, where the organizers will announce registration and open the payment link once they are ready. The fee for the tournament is prorated based on your rating and birth year, so click on the right link! The website will also have links to discounted hotels near the playing venue, and discounts to take bus excursions if you choose to do so. Icelandair has good deals to direct flights to Reykjavík from Seattle, usually in November, so don't miss those (our tickets cost around \$500 roundtrip). Also, when you arrive at the Keflavík airport, you still have a 50-minute drive to downtown Reykjavík. You could get a taxi, which is very expensive, or you could take the Flybus, which is also discounted for chess players, and you can pre-book your tickets through the Reykjavík Open website! Pack warm clothes and be ready for lots of good chess! Watch out, Iceland! The Pacific Northwest chess crew is coming to town once again!

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The Man Benji, The Myth Sarang, The Legend Vivaan



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# Washington Father's Day Open



June 20-21, 2026

Hotel 116 Bellevue

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

**Format:** A 5-round Swiss in three sections: **Yoda Open, Boba Fett U1700, and Chewbacca U1200.**

**Entry fee:** \$110 by 6/13, \$140 after. \$60 play-up fee if rated 1500-1699 or 1000-1199 in both NWSRS and USCF and playing up in Yoda Open or Boba Fett U1700, respectively. Chess Jedis rated 2200+ USCF receive a \$50 discount. Open to all junior + adult players. Maximum of 200 players, please register early to reserve your spot!

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

Father's Day Blitz: ~ 7pm or asap.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Special Prizes (per section):

Skywalker Biggest Upset Win: \$20/rd., Leia Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Han Solo Best Dressed: \$20/day, Obi-Wan Best Dad Player (by TPR): \$50, Darth Vader Best Parent/Child Team (by avg. TPR): \$50.

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

**Registration:** Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration). Pay by SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), Zelle (Tag: wa-chess, ID: washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com), or mail a check to WCF. Registration and payment **deadline: Fri. 6/19 @ 5pm.** No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline.

**Father's Day Blitz:** 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 June 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](mailto:washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com)

# A Conversation With Chad Fondren

(Playing Like A Rock Star)

Ken Lee

**I**t's not often that you meet someone who is so passionate about Chess and Rock and Roll but Chad Fondren isn't your typical player.

Chad owns and operates two School of Rock franchises (Seattle Downtown and Issaquah) and heads up the Issaquah Highlands Chess Club.

I sat down with Chad to discuss how he manages to blend his two passions and the unique connection between chess and music.

**Ken:** When did you start playing chess?

**Chad:** I started when I was five. My dad introduced the game to me and my older brother. Dad was clever and knew how to motivate us.

He offered us \$100 when we could beat him in chess.

When my brother finally beat my dad, my brother decided: "I'm good. I don't need to play anymore."

It took me until I was about six and I finally beat my dad. By then, I had already fallen in love with the game.

I played my first scholastic tournament with my elementary school club when I was ten.

**Ken:** What was a pivotal point in your chess journey?

**Chad:** It was in junior high school in Kent, Washington. I made a friend who was so passionate and competitive about chess that it really accelerated my interest through junior high and high school. It

was great to have a friend who would play, analyze games, and just talk about chess on a regular basis.

**Ken:** What's the strongest memory for you of playing chess at that time?

**Chad:** In 1992, I was playing in my first USCF tournament at the Yakima Open. By coincidence the tournament was happening when the Fischer-Spassky games were being televised.

It was kind of wild. We would play and then rush to hear updates from the Fischer-Spassky match between rounds.

**Ken:** Let's talk about your love of music. When did that start for you?

**Chad:** I was really drawn to music at a very early age. I loved to listen to music on the radio, and by the time I was in fifth grade I started playing the trumpet. That's been my main instrument ever since.

**Ken:** Did your competitive nature help you in music like it did with chess?

**Chad:** Yes, now that I think about it, I really liked to push myself in both chess and music. I wasn't the best, but I could always look up to someone and set my goals a little higher.

My high school band had a really competitive jazz program. It was always interesting to me to see where I was compared to my bandmates. I could see and hear where I was weaker and stronger than my peers. It gave me something to shoot for. I guess it's similar to the concept of "playing up" in chess, that is playing against stronger opponents to grow as a player.

**Ken:** In high school, cliques often form where people want to force you into a box. Did you feel pressure to pick between your chess and your music friends?

**Chad:** I just never paid that much attention to those labels. I'm sure there were people who were casting their opinions, but I just didn't care.

I just knew what made me happy.

I guess it was things that certain people would consider nerdy like chess, music, D&D, and computers. I just made it a point to pursue all those interests. I just loved them all.

Fortunately, I was able to make friends in each of those social circles.

**Ken:** How did your chess journey continue to unfold during your university years?

**Chad:** I attended Central Washington University in Ellensburg and as soon as I got there, I started the chess club. At the same time, I majored in music business with a minor in trumpet performance.

**Ken:** How do you think chess and music are related?

**Chad:** I think of both chess and music as beautiful blends of art and science.

Some players lean into more of the science part—I suppose the mathematical part of the game.

But I think what's more interesting to me is the emotional side of both chess and music.

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

**Chad:** Music is a very emotional medium. Whether you choose to listen to a certain type of music or play a particular type of music, you are making a choice to place yourself in a specific type of emotional state.

When it comes to chess, I think my favorite emotional part of chess is the opening.

**Ken:** What do you mean by that?

**Chad:** I have a passion for openings in general. There is something about the beginning of the game when it's fresh and exciting. The game can go in any direction.

That's the emotional part of chess that I most relate to and the part that keeps me interested and engaged.

**Ken:** What are some specific differences between playing chess and rock music?

**Chad:** In rock music, you are supposed to emote and communicate what you're feeling through the music and your instrument. In chess tournaments, you are supposed to adopt a "poker face" where you don't let your opponent know what you are feeling or thinking.

But there are exceptions to that of course.

**Ken:** When would be a good opportunity to show your emotions in chess?

**Chad:** I'm thinking of New York and other cities where chess hustlers play with raw emotion.

They purposely try to rattle their opponents with anything and everything they've got including anger, humor, humiliation, and more.

I haven't personally played in those kinds of chess events, but I can see how emotions would be dialed up in intensity.

**Ken:** Did you continue to play chess after university?

**Chad:** No, I took quite a long break of almost 25 years. I got busy with my career, marriage and family, and things just kind of took over. The School of Rock Issaquah started up in 2016, and it took an enormous amount of work and time to get it up and running.

**Ken:** What brought you back to chess?

**Chad:** Like a lot of people, it was



*Chad Fondren*

because of the COVID Pandemic and The Queen's Gambit in 2020.

Way back in 1995, I had won the Washington State Class C Championship, and I thought that was going to be the pinnacle of my chess career.

But in 2020, I started playing again and rediscovering a whole new world through Chess.com, YouTube videos, and new chess meet ups at clubs.

It was exciting and it felt great to start competing again.

**Ken:** When did you start the Issaquah Highlands Chess Club?

**Chad:** This is when my music and chess worlds accidentally collided. We had completed a School of Rock event at Blakely Hall in Issaquah.

I asked the Issaquah Highlands Council (who manages Blakely Hall) if we could host some chess events in Issaquah.

**Ken:** When did that happen?

**Chad:** It was late 2021, and everything came together quite quickly. The folks in charge told us that we could host any chess event we wanted as long as it was open to the public and that we didn't charge any fees.

We've been running chess events once a week ever since. We host tournaments, simuls, lectures, and have built a strong chess community on the East Side.

**Ken:** What are your future goals in chess?

**Chad:** I was listening to Ben Johnson on the "Perpetual Chess" Podcast the other day and he wasn't shy about articulating how hard it is to improve in chess as you get older.

That being said, I don't like putting limits on myself or other people. I'd like to think I can continue to learn and work hard and get to a Class A (1800+) or even Expert (2000+) level in chess. In the meantime, I'm having a lot of fun.

**Ken:** I see you have a chess board here at the School of Rock Downtown Seattle. Do you actively encourage your music students to play?

**Chad:** Actually, it happens very organically. Somehow just having a chess board in our lobby encourages people to play. I don't routinely promote chess at the School of Rock, nor do I promote my School of Rock program at IHCC. It just

seems to happen naturally, which is great.

**Ken:** Now from your unique outpost of working in both chess and music, what are some interesting parallels you see between the two?

**Chad:** I think it boils down to three areas.

In both chess and music there is a strong element of improvisation. With music, you have to know the basics like chords and song structure, but what you do within that can be entirely up to you—particularly in jazz.

In chess, things don't always go as planned so you have to improvise and get creative.

The second thing chess and music have in common is pattern recognition. Your brain just starts seeing and recognizing patterns that help you become a more agile and versatile player.

The last thing is tempo/timing. The concept of tempo or rhythm is central to all music, but we often hear chess players and coaches talk about tempo in a chess game as well. Gaining tempo means achieving a desired outcome in fewer

moves than your opponent, while losing tempo means using more moves than necessary.

**Ken:** Why do you think so many neurodivergent kids gravitate towards chess and music?

**Chad:** I'm not an expert on this subject, but I can tell you that at the School of Rock, we've had many neurodivergent kids really blossom at our school. For many, I think it's the aspect of playing with other kids in a group, working toward the common goal of a big rock show at a major Seattle venue, and coming out of the experience more confident than when they started. The music itself also serves as a super effective focal point to channel their attention.

In the case of chess, it's the 64 squares. That's the whole world they need to deal with.

With music, it's a limited space for them to channel their focus as well (12 notes, 88 keys, six strings, etc.). In both cases, the magic happens when they pour all their creativity, focus, and love into that world.

**Ken:** Check and mate.



# Vancouver Open

July 25 - 26, 2026

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

**Mail To:** Washington Chess Federation, c/o Orlov Chess Academy-

4174 148<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE  
Building I, Ste. M  
Redmond, WA 98052

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

**Registration:** Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration). Pay with Zelle (ID: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com, Tag: WA-Chess), SettleKing (Washington Chess Federation), check mailed to address above, or cash at site.

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

**HR:** \$191 Standard King/Double Queen Room. Booking [link](#). Use code 90C if booking by phone.

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

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

**Prize Fund:** \$2,700 (based on 60 paid entries).

**Lewis Open:** 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$400, 325, 250.

1<sup>st</sup> U2000/U1800: \$150

**Clark U1700:** 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>: \$300, 200, 150.

1<sup>st</sup> U1600/U1400/U1200: \$140, 1<sup>st</sup> Unrated: \$105.

**Special Prizes (per section):** Biggest Upset win: \$25, Best Female Player (by TPR): \$50, Best Senior Player (50+, by TPR): \$50.

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

**Entry Fee:** \$90 if postmarked or online by 7/18, \$100 by 7/24, \$110 at site. \$45 play-up fee if rated U1700 USCF and playing in Lewis Open. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs.

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

**Rounds:** Sat. @ 10 AM, 12:30 PM, 6 PM. Sun. @ 10 AM, 3:30 PM.

**Rating:** USCF rated. July 2026 USCF rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

**Memberships:** USCF and WCF membership required, other states accepted.

# TOURNAMENTS



venue & mail

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

info & events calendar

[www.seattlechess.club](http://www.seattlechess.club)

club & tournament inquiries

[contact@seattlechess.club](mailto:contact@seattlechess.club)

## Entry fees

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

Prepayment preferred! Deadlines may be given.

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

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

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

## May 3 (Sun.)

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

## May Tornado

## May 24-25 (Sun.-Mon.)

## Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss

See below.

## May 30 (Sat.)

## May Quads

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/>.

## May 1, 8, 15, \*, 29 (Fri.)

## May Flowers

One U.S. Chess-rated round per night, 4 rounds per month, at 7:30pm. **Time control:** 40 moves in 90 minutes w/10sec. increment, then sudden death 60 minutes w/10sec. inc. SCC members free, \$5/night others. Play in any or all rounds! **Sign up** at [contact@seattlechess.club](mailto:contact@seattlechess.club). **Venue:** Seattle CC, 28 players max. \*no game on 5/22 due to WA Open

## Coming up:

- **June Quads** – June 13; tentative, 2B confirmed
- **Emerald City Open** – June 27-28; confirmed
- **Seafair Open** – weekend in late July or early Aug.; 2B confirmed

*Check our events calendar periodically for confirmed dates.*

## 4th Annual

## Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss

May 24-25, 2026 @ WA Open - Redmond Marriott

- ♣ A 4-round Swiss in 2 sections: Botvinnik (1500+) and Korchnoi (U1500); may be merged if small.
- ♣ **Time control:** Game/120 + 30-second increment.
- ♣ **Rounds:** Sunday & Monday 5/24-25, 11am & 4:30pm both days.
- ♣ **Entry fee:** Online by Saturday 5/23 at 5pm – \$40 SCC members, \$50 others. Onsite add \$10. EF waived for unrated players who purchase memberships. US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA memberships required.
- ♣ **Register** at <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/>
- ♣ **Registration:** Sunday 5/25 @ 10-10:30 AM (unless starting with a half-point bye).
- ♣ **Guaranteed prize fund: \$1,000.**
  - **Botvinnik: 1st \$240, 2nd \$150, 3rd \$120, 1st U1650 \$80.**
  - **Korchnoi: 1st \$120, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$80, 1st U1300 \$60, 1st Unrated \$50.**
- ♣ 1 half-point bye available.



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CORVALLIS CHESS CLUB'S 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL **DAN ROGERS** MEMORIAL

# CHESS TOURNAMENT

**July 18 and 19, 2026 • 5-SS, 90+10**

📍 **Comfort Suites** at Linn County Fairground, 100 Opal Ct, **Albany, Oregon**



**\$40 Entry Fee**  
(NTAFLOF)

## REGISTRATION

**\$40 EF!** Visit [corvallischess.org](http://corvallischess.org) for the direct registration link, or scan the QR code. *Registration ends July 17 2026 at 5pm. No onsite registration. Registration will close at 120 players.*

## SCHEDULE

**Player's Meeting:** Sat. 9:50am

**Saturday:** 10am, 2pm, 5:30pm, 9pm Blitz Tournament.

**Sunday:** 10am & 2pm.

Winners announced end of R5.

## \$3000 GUARANTEED PRIZE FUND

**OPEN:** \$500-350-250. **Under 1600:** \$400-300-200. **Under 1000:** \$300-200-100.

*Two half-point byes allowed, must request before first round. \$15 Play-Up fee.*

**BONUS PRIZES:** **Top Female:** \$100 (NB allowed). **Mixed Doubles:** \$200 Best male+female 2-player team combined score among all sections. Team must average under 1900, may play different sections. Register (no extra fee) by 2pm Sat. **Top Unrated Player:** \$50. **Top Upset:** \$50.

**5+3 BLITZ TOURNAMENT:** Sat. 9:00 pm, register on site by 8:50 pm. \$10 EF. 80% prize payout!

**USCF RATED - MEMBERSHIP REQUIRED - See [uschess.org](http://uschess.org) for details.**

**HOTEL RATE:** \$169+tax double queen or king, includes free full hot buffet breakfast. Pool, sauna, gym, and other amenities. Reserve by 6/22/2026, call 541-928-0921 and request chess rates.

**Tournament Organizer:** **Jim Nelson** (CCC President) - [jwnelson.nelson1@gmail.com](mailto:jwnelson.nelson1@gmail.com)

You can visit [corvallischess.org](http://corvallischess.org) for registration link and information.

