

Central Region Report

By NM Andrew Rea, Central RVP

Scholastic Championship (Continued from page 4)

Lets take a brief pause now to note why we have 'Under' sections in the next four groups. This is a Tournament Novelty introduced in New York City some 15 years ago, giving more players reason to play- players are aware that most of the participants will vie for the very top, but if one category can be made into two, there can be more incentive. Add in the team element, and it can be seen there are typically more players who choose to play. Regards the team competition, these champions will be noted later in this recap. For now, on to K-3 u600. Here we have 2 players at 5/5, Michael Wang and Asa Bodlak, chased hard by 7 others at 4/5! Congrats to Michael and Asa, with Michael narrowly having the better tiebreak. Re tiebreaks, please be aware there is not yet a perfect tiebreak system, and that the Rating Report posted on US Chess is just that, a rating report- the players are not listed in tiebreak order, they are listed in rating order.

If K-3 was close, how to designate K-3 Championship? Maybe not quite off the charts, but 6 players tied for first at 4/5! Well played by Yi Sha, Vivian Mulay, Aakash Jani, Ryan Ratliff, Damian Alexander, Addison Baumstark, with Yi Sha landing overall first on tiebreak. As with our other sections, our players get to realize that Plan A is not always correct and have to then navigate on the fly through plenty of resistance.... and then do it again, rinse and repeat! Of course in some instances a player might have had one oversight in the whole tournament and as a result there goes the perfect marks, ouch! Of course our players, in this section and the others, learn early and often to deal with adversity at the board.

It isn't easy, but our players typically showed strong perseverance, ready for that next round- and then for the next event! In the K-5 u700 Section, it would seem like smooth sailing for Nicholas Vu, 5/5! Of course its five wins in the box score, but given there were 4 players at 4/5, its fairly likely there were some nervy moments for Nicholas- and we can see he steered clear of the obstacles when all was said and done. Similarly in the K-5 Championship group, one player at 5/5, Riyaan Datta- of course this was anything but easy as there was one player at 4.5/5 and 3 at 4/5.

As we move to K-8 u1000, the players are stronger, more experience- and it is not getting any easier to score points, seeing as the sense of danger is better with experience, as is recognition of opportunity. This section may well have been the most closely contested- 11 players at 4/5, close, no cigar..... as we have 3 players at 4.5/5! Congrats to Parvati Chakrabarti, Catherine Jiang, and Vincent Hubacheck, with the better tiebreak going to Parvati. Well played by our trio! Regards the K-8 Championship, this was also highly contested, with Advait Nair finishing alone at 4.5/5, holding off the charges of the 6 players at 4/5! Nary a dull moment in these sections!

K-12 u1100 had one player, Cole Carin, at 5/5, very well played! He needed that big score as there were 2 at 4.5/5 and 7 others at 4/5. Speaking of close competition, on to the K-12 Championship, with various and sundry Fide Masters, National Masters, Experts..... and as with other sections, there are lower rated players who also played well and scored well! In the end, FM Bach Ngo won the K-12 Championship at 4.5/5, with 6 players (not all Masters!) chasing hard, chasing skillfully, at 4/5.

On to the Team Competition- lets note that the pairings are done on an individual basis, with team standings then gleaned from how the players score. Yes, players from same team can be paired against each other, though this tends to be the exception. From our 9 sections, there were dozens of teams- another way for players not able to compete for first place to still contribute to the event by dusting off some early mishap and score points later to help their team. In the K-1 Championship, it is Oak Hall School, in from Gainesville, scoring the Team Championship- well done by Mihai Holcomb, Leighann Hood, Mark Wang, and Suraj Jani.

Oak Hall evidently has a strong chess program (Editor's note: and the evidence is strong), as they also won the K-3 Team Championships! K-3 u600, they were led by Julian Moguillansky, Myka Solberg, Emma Flores, and Rhett West. In the K-3 Team Championship, Oak Hall was well represented by Aakash Jani, Damian Alexander, Celine Chen, and Addison Baumstark - well played!

Oak Hall also led the way in the K-5 sections! K-5 u700 it is Nicholas Vu, Asher Austin, Jack Eisenmenger, and Aayan Patel leading the way, while in the K-5 Championship Oak Hall was well represented by Sophie Li, Ishir Kumar, Henry Thomas, and Curtis Hood- again, congratulations, well played!

K-8 u1000 Team Championship was won by Divine Savior, making the trip north from Miami- well done by Karla Morales, David Cabrera, Evan Bello, and Roshni Alvarez. As for the K-8 Team Champion, say hello- and more congratulations!- to Abraham Lincoln HS, in from Gainesville. Brian Bird, Nick Liu, Ezra Sawicki, and Garrick Wu, again, well played! And now for our K-12 u1100, a Champion effort by Lake Nona HS, Orlando! Bhagyesh Jethwani, Kenneth Wu, Dylan Nguyen, and Aaron Storcher scoring this honor, well done! We close the team event with congratulations to Buchholz HS, Gainesville, well played by Bach Ngo, Jason Shen, Andrew Xing, and Ahan Mishra.

Best wishes to all of our participants, may thanks to the event Organizer, Kevin Pryor- there is always much happening in advance and during the event that is best left not disturbing the players so that the players can maintain concentration on their games! Its not a one person operation, there were several other contributors, they know who they are- I prefer the focus to be on our players, as there is not an event without them- thanks, and wait til next year!

