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On the front cover:

Brandon Jiang, shortly after becoming the
2023 Washington State Chess Champion.
Photo credit: Josh Sinanan.

On the back cover:

The historic Washington State Chess Championship trophy,
which lists winners dating back to the 1950s.
Jim McCormick, a seven-time Washington State Champion,
still holds the record. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

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2023 Washington President's Cup

By Josh Sinanan

The 2023 Washington President's Cup was held at the Orlov Chess Academies in Seattle and Redmond on February 4-5. Due to space constraints, the tournament was once again split between two locations, with the populous Open section of 31 players taking place in Seattle under the direction of Senior TD Fred Kleist and the more modest Reserve section of 21 players taking place in Redmond under the direction of WCF Scholastic Director Rekha Sagar with assistance from WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua. The five-round Swiss tournament over two days was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and organized by WCF Tournament Coordinator Valentin Razmov and WCF President Josh Sinanan.

Skylor Chan, an eighth grader from Odle Middle School in Bellevue, won the Open section with an undefeated 4.5/5 score. After a red-hot, double-win start, Chan won against both of the Jammalamadaka siblings, Varnika and Vihaan, respectively, in the final two rounds after taking a third round half-point bye! For his victory, Skylor is seeded into the Invitational section of the 2024 Washington State Championship.

Brier chess enthusiast Leonid Gavrysh captured second place honors a half-point back, losing only a single game to the young ringer Vihaan Jammalamadaka in round three. Six players tied for third/first U2000/first U1800 with 3.5 points apiece: Ted Wang from Medina, Vihaan Jammalamadaka from Redmond, Atharva Joshi from Sammamish, Varnika Jammalamadaka from Redmond, Vijay Nallappa from Redmond, and Nikhil Ramkumar from Bothell. In a truly unusual situation, the best upset prize was shared between Ramkumar and William Corbit from Seattle, each of whom scored a 293-point upset in the tournament.

In the Reserve U1600 section, two players—Amana Demberel from Seattle and Nugen Tran from Auburn—shared first/second place honors, each scoring an

undefeated four points from five games. Three players shared third/first U1400 honors a half-point back: Aarav Bharathy Mohan from Bothell, Rhadean Rubaiyat from Redmond, and Jan Lorenz Bartminn from Sammamish. Up-and-coming third grader Andres Flores Uriegas from Bothell earned the U1200 Prize with an even 2.5-point score. Olympia Chess King Keith Ciani claimed the U1000 prize with two points. New-comer Hong Xu from Kenmore won the Unrated prize and graciously donated his winnings back to the organizers, expressing his gratitude for all their hard work! Youngster Karthik Yakkali from Bothell captured the biggest upset victory (280 points) in the Reserve section. Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all who contributed to this fantastic event!

*Roberto Bojorquez (R) ponders his first move vs. William Corbit during the last round of the President's Cup on February 5 in Seattle.
Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.*



Washington Closed

Josh Sinanan

The 2023 Washington State Championship took place at Microsoft Building 99 in Redmond on February 11-12 and 18-20. Due to popular demand, a fifth section called the “Rising Stars” was added in addition to the other ten-player round robins: Championship, Premier, Invitational, and Challengers. The fields of each section were determined by rating and seeding, with the highest rating among the January US Chess regular, current Northwest, and current FIDE rating considered. All sections were tri-rated: Northwest, US Chess, and FIDE. Senior tournament director and national arbiter Fred Kleist directed the tournament with assistance from WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua, who served as chief floor judge. The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and organized by WCF President Josh Sinanan.

Championship

Brandon Jiang, a sophomore at Bellevue High School, won the Championship section with an undefeated seven points from nine games to become the 2023 Washington State Champion! Brandon got off to a red-hot start, downing rating favorites Megan Lee and Tian Sang in the first two rounds, capitalizing on his opponent’s time pressure in both games. Jiang took a cautious approach in the middle stretch, drawing four games against the other experts in the field. This set up an exciting showdown in the final round between Jiang and Aliyev, the two leaders of the Championship section, which Jiang was able to win despite being the rating underdog and playing the black pieces. For his victory, Brandon was awarded the US Chess National Master title, congratulations Brandon! Former South Carolina State Champion NM Timur Aliyev of Kirkland and two-time Washington State Champion WIM Megan Lee of Bellevue tied for second/

third place a half-point back with 6.5 points. FM Tian Sang of Redmond and Ananth Gottumukkala of Sammamish shared fourth/fifth place to round out the prize winners.

**Brandon Jiang (2214) –
Megan Lee (2351) [C53]**

WA State, Championship
Redmond, WA (R1), February 11, 2023
[Brandon Jiang]

Megan, the defending Washington state champion and top-seed in the Championship section, defeated me last year in the Washington state championship tournament after grinding me out from a slightly worse position.

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

I considered several opening options such as Scotch, Giuoco Piano, and Ruy Lopez against Megan’s 1.e4 e5. However, upon analyzing her previous games, I did not like her setup against Ruy Lopez. Initially, I planned to use an unusual line in Scotch Mieses, but after assessing the complexities of the resulting middle-game positions, I lacked the confidence to execute it. Ultimately, I settled on a Giuoco Piano setup that could apply long-term pressure on Black. This approach could come as a surprise to Megan, given my recent tendency to play Ruy Lopez.

3...Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d3 a6 6.h3 Ba7 7.Bb3 h6 8.Nbd2 0-0



Position after 8...0-0

9.Nf1

I also looked at 9.g4! d5 (9...d6 10.Nf1 Be6 11.g5 hxg5 12.Bxg5 Nb8 13.Rg1 Kh7 14.Nh4 Nbd7 15.Qf3 Qe8 16.Ne3 Bxb3 17.axb3 Qe6 18.Nd5 Rac8 19.0-0-0 c6 20.Bxf6 Nxf6 21.Rxg7+ Kxg7 22.Rg1+ Ng4 23.Rxg4+ Kh8 24.Nf6 Rg8 25.Rxg8+ Rxg8 26.Qh5+ Kg7 27.Qg5+ 1-0 (27) Mamedov,R (2654)-Nasuta,G (2512) Europe Echecs INT 2021) 10.g5 hxg5 11.Nxg5 Ne7 12.exd5 Nxd5 13.Nde4 Bf5 14.Qf3 Bg6 15.Rg1 c6 16.Bd2 a5 17.0-0-0 a4 18.Bc2 Nh5 19.d4 exd4 20.c4 Nb6 21.Ng3 d3 22.Bxd3 Qxd3 23.Qxd3 Bxd3 24.Nxh5 Bg6 25.Ne6 Nxc4 26.Nhxg7 a3 27.bxa3 Bxf2 28.Nxf8 Kxf8 29.Ne6+ Ke7 30.Nc7 Rxa3 31.Bb4+ c5 32.Nd5+ Ke6 33.Bxa3 Bxg1 34.Nf4+ Kf5 35.Rxg1 Nxa3 36.Rf1 Ke5 37.Nxg6+ fxg6 38.Rg1 Kf5 39.Rg3 Nb5 40.Rb3 Nd6 41.a4 Ke5 42.a5 Nc4 43.Rb5 Kd5 44.Rxb7 Nxa5 45.Rg7 Nb3+ 46.Kb2 Nd4 47.Rxg6 1-0 (47) Mamedov,R (2659)-Warmerdam,M (2498) Wijk aan Zee 2020

9...d5 10.Qe2 Be6 11.Ng3 Na5 12.Nxe5

Another option in my preparation is 12.Bc2 dxe4 13.dxe4 Bc4 14.Qd1 Qxd1+ 15.Bxd1 Bd3 (15...Rfe8 16.Be2 Rad8 17.Nd2 Bd3 18.Bxd3 Rxd3 19.Ke2=) 16.Nxe5 Bxe4 17.0-0 Rfe8 18.Nf3 Nc4 19.Be2 Bd5 20.Rd1 b5 21.Kf1 Rad8 22.Nd4 c5 23.Ndf5 Bb8 24.b3 Nd6 25.Be3 Nfe4 26.Rac1 Nxf5 27.Nxf5 b4 28.cxb4 cxb4 29.Bb6 Rd7 30.Bg4 Rb7 31.Bd4 Be5 32.Ne3 Bxd4 33.Rxd4 1-0 (33) Kramnik,V (2480)-Galdunts,S (2470) Kherson 1991

12...Nxb3 13.axb3 dxe4 14.dxe4 Bxb3 15.Be3

15.0-0 Re8

15...Re8 16.f4?!

16.Bxa7! Rxa7 (16...Rxe5 17.Bd4 Re6 18.0-0 Nxe4 19.Nxe4 f5 20.Nf6+ Qxf6 21.Qf3=) 17.f4 (17.Nf3 b5 with Bc4 threat, White cannot castle.)

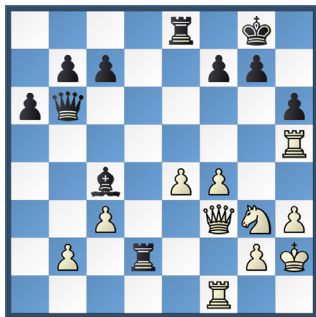
16...Nd7 17.Nxd7 Bxe3 18.Qxe3 Qxd7 19.0-0 Rad8 20.Qf3 Qe6 21.Kh2 Rd2 22.Ra5?

22.Rf2! Red8 23.Qe3

22...Qb6!

22...Rxb2 23.Re5 Qc8 24.Qg4!→ and Nf5 is next.

23.Rh5 Bc4



Position after 23...Bc4

24.Rg1

24.Rd1?? Be2!+ (24...Rxd1 25.Qxd1 Qxb2 26.Qd4 Be6 27.f5 Ba2 28.Rxh6 c5 (28...gxh6 29.Nh5 Kf8 30.Qc5+ Re7 (30...Kg8 31.Nf6+) 31.f6) 29.Qd7 (29.Qe3 f6 30.Rxf6 gxf6 31.Qh6 Qb6 32.Nh5 Qc7+ 33.Kg1 Rf8 34.Qg6+ Kh8 35.Qh6+ Kg8=) 29...Qb5 30.Qd2 gxh6 31.Qxh6 Qc6 32.f6+-)

24...Rxb2 25.Qg4 Kf8 26.e5 Bd3

26...Qc6 27.Nf5 Qg6 28.Qh4 threatens Rg5! 28...Bd3 (28...f6 29.Nxh6) 29.Nxh6 (29.Rg5 Qh7) 29...f5!!☞

27.Qd7 Bb5 28.Qg4 Qe6? 29.Qh4?

29.Nf5 Qg6 30.Qh4

29...Qe7?!

29...Bd3-+

30.Qg4

30.Rxh6 Qxh4 31.Rxh4 g6. 32.Ne4 Ke7

33.Nf6 Rd8

30...Bd7 31.Qd1 Rd8 32.Qd3??

32.Qa1 Rf2 33.Qe1 Rxf4 34.Qe3 Rf6

32...Kg8?

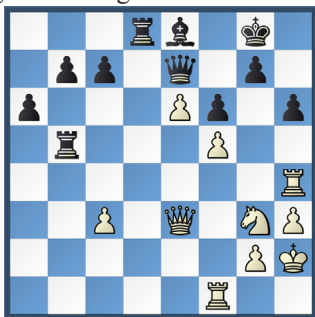
32...g6 33.Rxh6 Kg7 34.Rh5 Bg4-+

33.Qe3 Rb6?

33...a5 34.f5 f6 35.e6 Bc6

34.f5 f6 35.e6 Be8 36.Rh4 Rb5 37.Rf1

37.Rg4 is also a good alternative.



Position after 37.Rf1

37...Kf8?

37...Re5 38.Qf4 a5☞

38.Rxh6! gxh6??

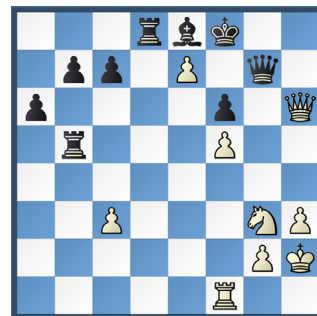
In time trouble, Megan missed White's move 40.

38...Kg8 39.Rh4±

39.Qxh6+ Qg7

39...Kg8 40.Ne4+-

40.e7+!



Position after 40.e7+

Black resigned. "A good beginning is half of the success!" While I consider myself fortunate to have won this game, I must say that going into a tournament with the goal of defeating the defending champion (who is likely the strongest player in the section) gave me a tremendous amount of confidence for the remainder of the tournament.

1-0



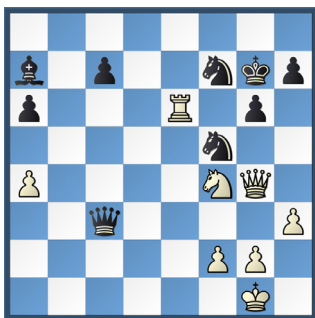
Defending Washington State Champion Megan Lee (L) defends the black side of the Italian against Brandon Jiang during the first round of the Washington State Championship. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

Tian Sang (2347) –
 Brandon Jiang (2214) [C53]
 WA State, Championship
 Redmond, WA (R2), February 11, 2023

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Bb6
 5.d4 Qe7 6.d5 Nd8 7.a4 a6 8.0-0 d6
 9.Re1 Nf6 10.Nbd2 0-0 11.Bd3 Ne8
 12.Nc4 Ba7 13.h3 g6 14.b4 f6 15.Ba3
 f5 16.b5 fxe4 17.Bxe4 Qf7 18.Qd3 Bf5
 19.bxa6 bxa6 20.Nxe5 Bxe4? 21.Qxe4
 dxe5 22.Bxf8 Qxf8 23.Qxe5 Nf7 24.Qe6
 Qc5 25.Re2? Ned6?! 26.Ng5? Qxc3
 27.Rae1 Rf8 28.Nf3 Kg7 29.Qd7 Rd8
 30.Qg4 Nf5 31.Ng5 Rxd5?! 32.Ne6+?
 Kf6 33.Nf4 Rd6 34.Re6+ Rxe6
 35.Rxe6+ Kg7

[Diagram top of next column]

36.Nxg6?? Qc1+?? 37.Kh2 N7h6
 38.Qe2?? hxg6 39.Qe5+ Kh7 40.Qf6



Position after 35...Kg7

Qf4+ 41.Kh1 Qc1+ 42.Kh2 Qf4+
 43.Kh1 Ng3+! 44.Kh2 Qxf6+ 45.Rxf6
 Ne4 46.Rxa6 Bxf2 47.Rc6 Bb6 48.g4
 Nf7 49.Kg2 Ned6 50.Rc2 Kg7 51.h4
 Ne5 52.Kg3 c5 53.Kf4 Nd3+ 54.Ke3 c4+
 55.Kd2 Ba5+ 56.Ke3 Nb4 57.Rd2 Bb6+
 58.Ke2 Bc5 59.h5 g5 60.a5 c3 61.Rd1 c2

62.Rc1 Nc4 63.a6 Na3 64.Kd2 Nxa6
 0-1

Brandon Jiang (2214) –
 Nikash Vemparala (2230) [C53]
 WA State, Championship
 Redmond, WA (R3), February 12, 2023

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6
 5.d3 0-0 6.Bb3 a5 7.h3 d6 8.Nbd2 Be6
 9.Ba4 Ne7 10.0-0 Ng6 11.d4 Ba7 12.Re1
 c6 13.Bc2 Qc7 14.Nf1 h6 15.Ng3 Rad8
 16.Be3 b5 17.Qd2 Kh7 18.a4 Rfe8
 19.Nf5 Bxf5 20.exf5 Ne7 21.axb5 cxb5
 22.Qe2 Nc6 23.dxe5 Nxe5 24.Bxa7
 Nxf3+ 25.Qxf3 Qxa7 26.g4 Kg8 27.Bd3
 Qb6 28.h4 Nd7 29.Be4 Ne5 30.Qg2 Qc5
 31.Rad1 Qc4 32.g5 hxg5 33.Rd4 Qc7

½-½

Championship



2023 Washington State Championship group photo: (L-R) Amana Demberel, Ryan Min, Tim Moroney, Pranav K. Anoop, Megan Lee, Timur Aliyev, Ananth Gottumukkala, and Nikash Vemparala. Not pictured: Brandon Jiang, Tian Sang, and Viktors Pupols. Note: Amana actually played in the Challengers section, but arrived late and snuck into the Championship photo! Photo credit: Josh Sinanan.

Ryan Min (2088) –
 Brandon Jiang (2214) [A84]
 WA State, Championship
 Redmond, WA (R4), February 12, 2023

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.e3 Nf6 4.Bd3 Be7 5.Nc3
 0-0 6.Nge2 d6 7.0-0 e5 8.f3 c5 9.d5 Na6
 10.a3 Kh8 11.Bd2 Bd7 12.e4 f4 13.g4 h5
 14.h3 hxg4 15.hxg4 Nxg4 16.fxg4 Bxg4
 17.Rf2 g5? 18.Rh2+ Kg7?



Position after 18...Kg7

19.Kf2? Qd7 20.Qa4 Qxa4 21.Nxa4
 Rh8 22.Rah1 Rxh2+ 23.Rxh2 Bd7
 24.Nac3 Nc7 25.Rg2 Rh8 26.Ng1 Ne8
 27.Be2 Kg6 28.Bg4 Bxg4 29.Rxg4 Nf6
 30.Rg2 g4 31.Ke2 Kf7 32.Kd3 Rh1
 33.Be1 a6 34.Nd1 Rh8 35.Nf2 Rg8 36.a4
 Bf8 37.Nd1 Bh6 38.Bh4 Nh5 39.Nf2 g3
 40.Nfh3 Nf6

½-½

Brandon Jiang (2214) –
 Viktors Pupols (2201) [A08]
 WA State, Championship
 Redmond, WA (R5), February 18, 2023

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.g3 Nf6 5.Bg2

Washington State Championship

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals	Tie-break(S-B)	Place	Prize	Seeded into...
1	CM Nikash Vemparala	2230	👑	1	0.5	0.5	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	3.5	13.75	7th		
2	Ryan Min	2088	0	👑	0.5	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	1	3	9.75	8th		
3	CM Brandon Jiang	2214	0.5	0.5	👑	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	1	1	7	20.75	1st	\$675.00	2024 WA State Championship
4	Ananth Gottumukkala	2086	0.5	1	0.5	👑	1	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	1	5.5	19.75	=4th/5th	\$112.50	
5	CM Timothy Moroney	2232	1	0	0.5	0	👑	0	0	0	0	1	2.5	8	9th		
6	CM Pranav K. Anoop	2111	0	1	0	0.5	1	👑	0.5	0	0	1	4	12.5	6th		
7	NM Timur Aliyev	2349	1	1	0	0.5	1	0.5	👑	0.5	1	1	6.5	23.5	=2nd/3rd	\$300.00	2024 WA State Championship
8	WIM Megan Lee	2351	1	1	0	1	1	1	0.5	👑	0	1	6.5	22.75	=2nd/3rd	\$300.00	2024 WA State Premier
9	FM Tian Sang	2347	1	0.5	0	0.5	1	1	0	1	👑	0.5	5.5	21.25	=4th/5th	\$112.50	
10	NM Viktors Pupols	2201	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	👑	1	4.5	10th		

Be7 6.Ngf3 0-0 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Re1 b5 9.e5
Ne8 10.Nf1 Nc7 11.h4 b4 12.c4 bxc3
13.bxc3 Rb8 14.N1h2 f5 15.exf6 Bxf6
16.Bg5 h6 17.Bxf6 Qxf6 18.Rc1 Rb2
19.Ng4 Qg6 20.Qa4



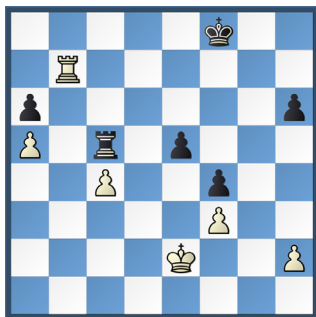
Position after 20.Qa4

20...Bd7? 21.Qa3 Rfb8 22.Nge5 Qe8
23.Nxc6 Bxc6 24.Qxc5 R8b6 25.Nd4
Na6 26.Qa3 Qf7 27.f4 Rd2 28.Rxe6 Nc7
29.Rxc6 Rxc6 30.Nxc6 Qe8 31.Ne5 Qb5
32.c4 Qb6+ 33.c5 Qf6 34.Qxa7

1-0

Brandon Jiang (2214) –
Ananth Gottumukkala (1994) [B51]
WA State, Championship
Redmond, WA (R6), February 18, 2023

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Nd7 4.d4 cxd4
5.Qxd4 a6 6.Bxd7+ Bxd7 7.Nc3 e5 8.
Qd3 Rc8 9.0-0 h6 10.Nd2! Qc7 11.Rd1!
Bg4 12.Re1 Nf6 13.Nf1 Be7 14.Ne3 Be6
15.a4 0-0 16.Rd1!? Qc5 17.Bd2 Bd8
18.Be1 Ba5 19.Ncd5 Bxd5 20.exd5 Bxe1
21.Rxe1 g6 22.a5 Qb4 23.Reb1 Rc5 24.
c3 Qe4 25.Rd1 Qxd3 26.Rxd3 Rfc8
27.c4 Nd7 28.b4 R5c7 29.f3 Kg7 30.g4
Rf8 31.Rc3 f5 32.gxf5 gxf5 33.Kf2 f4
34.Rg1+ Kh7 35.Nf1 Nf6 36.Nd2 Nxd5
37.Rd3 Nxb4 38.Rxd6 Rg7 39.Rxg7+
Kxg7 40.Rb6 Nd3+ 41.Ke2 Nc5 42.Nb3
Rc8 43.Nxc5 Rxc5 44.Rxb7+ Kf8



Position after 44...Kf8

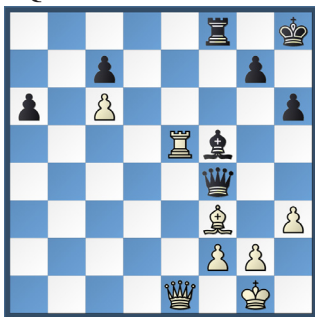
45.Rb6 Rxa5 46.Rxh6 Ke7 47.h4 Ra3
48.h5 Re3+ 49.Kf2 Rc3 50.Rc6 Rc2+
51.Kg1 a5 52.h6 Kf7 53.c5 a4 54.Ra6

Rxc5 55.Rxa4 Rc2 56.h7 Kg7 57.Ra7+
Kh8 58.Re7 Rc6 59.Kf2 Rc2+ 60.Ke1
Rh2 61.Rxe5 Kxh7 62.Rf5 Rh4 63.Ke2
Kg6 64.Rf8 Kg7 65.Ra8 Kf6 66.Kd3
Rh5 67.Ke4 Rb5 68.Ra6+ Kf7 69.Kxf4
Rb8 70.Ke4 Rb5 71.Kf4 Rc5 72.Kg4
Rb5 73.f4 Rc5 74.f5 Rc1 75.Ra7+ Kf6
76.Ra6+ Kf7 77.Ra3 Kf6 78.Ra6+ Kf7
79.Rb6 Rg1+ 80.Kf4

1/2-1/2

Timothy Moroney (2232) –
Brandon Jiang (2214) [C53]
WA State, Championship
Redmond, WA (R7), February 19, 2023

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Be4 Be5 4.c3 Bb6
5.d4 Qe7 6.0-0 Nf6 7.a4 a6 8.a5 Ba7
9.Re1 d6 10.h3 h6 11.Be3 0-0 12.Nbd2
Bd7 13.b4 exd4 14.cxd4 Nxb4 15.Qb3
d5 16.exd5 Qd6 17.Ne5 Bf5 18.Rac1 b5
19.axb6 Bxb6 20.Nc6? Nxc6 21.dxc6
Bxd4?! 22.Bxd4 Qxd4 23.Nf3 Qf4? 24.
Ne5? Ne4 25.Bxf7+ Kh7 26.Nd3 Qg5
27.Bd5 Nd2 28.Qc3 Rad8 29.Re5 Nf3+
30.Bxf3 Rxd3 31.Qxd3 Qxc1+ 32.Qd1
Qf4 33.Qe1 Kh8?



Position after 33...Kh8

34.Bd5? Bg6 35.Re6 Rd8 36.Rxg6 Rxd5
37.Qe8+ Kh7 38.Rg3 Qf5?! 39.Qe7
Rd1+ 40.Kh2 Qf6 41.Qxc7?! Rc1
42.Qd7 Rxc6 43.Rxg7+ Qxg7 44.Qxc6
Qe5+ 45.g3 a5 46.Kg2 Qa1 47.Qd7+
Kg8 48.Qe6+ Kg7 49.Kf3 a4 50.Qe7+
Kg6 51.Qe8+ Kg7 52.Qe7+ Kg8
53.Qe8+ Kh7 54.Qd7+ Kg6 55.Qe8+

1/2-1/2

Brandon Jiang (2214) –
Pranav Anoop (1985) [B31]
WA State, Championship
Redmond, WA (R8), February 19, 2023

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 g6 4.c3 Nf6
5.Qe2 Bg7 6.d4 cxd4 7.cxd4 0-0 8.Nc3
d6 9.h3 Nd7 10.Be3 a6 11.Ba4 b5 12.Bc2
Bb7 13.0-0 Rc8 14.a4?! b4 15.Na2 a5
16.Nc1 e5 17.d5 Ne7?! 18.Ne1 f5 19.f3

Kh8 20.Nb3 Ra8 21.Bd3 Nf6 22.Kh2 f4
23.Bf2 g5 24.Bb5 h5 25.Rc1 g4 26.hxg4
hxg4 27.fxg4 Be8? 28.g5 Ng4+ 29.Kg1
Bd7? 30.Bxd7 Qxd7 31.Nd3 Rfc8?
32.Rxc8+ Rxc8 33.Nxa5 Ra8? 34.Nc4
Nxf2 35.Qh5+ Kg8 36.Nxf2 Qc7 37.b3
Qc5 38.Kh1 Rf8 39.Ng4 Qc7 40.g6 Rd8
41.Qh7+ Kf8 42.Nf6 Rb8 43.Nd2

1-0

Player Bio: Timur Aliyev



Timur (Tim) Aliyev is originally from Baku, Azerbaijan where he started studying chess at the age of six with the first coach of Garry Kasparov when Kasparov became the world champion. Timur then moved to Israel where he became a master and played for his college team representing the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology—in the Israeli chess league. Timur has lived in the United States since 2004, he is a three-time South Carolina State Champion (2006, 2007, 2009), winner of “Battle of the Carolinas” (2008) match that featured the state champions of North Carolina and South Carolina. Timur led the University of South Carolina (where he earned his PhD in Engineering) team in the Pan-American intercollegiate tournaments (2007-2008). Timur holds one IM norm. He moved to Washington State in 2018.

Timur Aliyev (2349) –
Brandon Jiang (2214) [C41]
WA State, Championship
Redmond, WA (R9), February 20, 2023
[NM Timur Aliyev]

This game was played in the last round and was decisive in determining who is going to earn the state championship title. I was in clear first with 6.5 out eight, my opponent had six points.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 g6

Megan Lee played 3...Nf6 against me in round five. My opponent prepared a sideline.

4.d4 exd4 5.Nxd4 Bg7 6.Be3

6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Bc4 would have been more appropriate considering the tournament situation. White has a small but comfortable advantage.

6...d6

6...Nf6 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.e5 Ng8 9.f4 d6 10.Qf3 Ne7 11.Bc4 0-0 12.0-0-0

7.Be2

7.Qd2 Nf6 8.f3 0-0 9.0-0-0 The position resembles the classical dragon setup with the c-pawn on the board instead of the e-pawn. With no counterplay on the c-file for Black, White has a comfortable play.

7...Nf6 8.0-0 0-0 9.f3

9.Qd2 Ng4 10.Bxg4 Bxg4 11.Rae1 Bd7 12.f4 Black's two-bishop advantage is compensated by White's control of the center.

9...Re8 10.Qd2

10.Bc4

10...d5!



Position after 10...d5

11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Rad1 Qe7 13.Bg5

13.Bd4 dxe4 14.fxe4 Nxe4 15.Nxe4 Qxe4 16.Bxg7 Kxg7 17.Bf3 Qc4 18.b3 Qc5+ 19.Qd4+ Re5 (19...Qxd4+ 20.Rxd4 Rb8 21.Bxc6=) 20.Bxc6 Rb8 21.Qxc5 Rxc5 22.Bd5= would have been much safer considering a draw was satisfactory for me.

13...Qc5+

13...dxe4!? 14.fxe4 Nxe4 15.Nxe4 (15.Bxe7 Nxd2 16.Rxd2 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Rxe7 18.Rd8+ Kg7 19.Bf3) 15...Qxe4 16.Bf3 Qc4 17.b3 Qc5+ 18.Kh1 Bf5 19.c4

14.Kh1=

14.Be3 Qb4 (14...Qe7 15.Bg5 Qc5+ 16.Be3 Qe7 17.Bg5. I am sure my opponent would not repeat the moves given the title at stake in this game.) 15.Bd4 dxe4 16.a3 Qe7 17.fxe4 Nxe4 18.Nxe4 Qxe4 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Bf3

14...Be6?!

14...a5

15.Na4! Qf8

At this point I felt that my pieces were better coordinated. White intends to play b3 followed by c4 or Qa5. 16.Qf4 seemed attractive as Black has to choose between 16...Nd7 and 16...Qe7. Both moves seemed to me as unsatisfactory to play for a win...

16.Qf4

At this point I offered a draw.

16...Qe7?!

I actually wanted my opponent to play 16...Qe7, as the queen voluntarily moves into a pin giving White some time to make solid moves like b3, Rde1, Bd3 in anticipation of upcoming exchanges after Black's Nh5. 16...Nd7 17.Qxc7 Nb6 18.Nxb6 axb6 19.Qxb6 Rab8 20.Qxc6 Rec8 21.Qa6 dxe4 22.fxe4 Rxc2

17.Qh4

17.b3! a5 (17...Nh5?! 18.Qd2 f6 19.Be3 f5 20.Bg5 Bf6 21.Bxf6 Nxf6 22.e5 Nd7 23.Qc3±) 18.Qh4 Bc8 19.Rde1 Qd6 20.Bd3

17...Bd7

17...h6 18.Bxh6 Bxh6 19.Qxh6 dxe4 20.Nc3! exf3 21.Bxf3

18.Nc3

18.Bd3 Qd6 19.b3 Nh5 20.Rfe1

18...Qe6?!

18...h6

19.exd5?

Serious mistake. White releases the pressure in the center and gives Black's queen free access to the b6-square. 19. Rfe1 is much stronger!

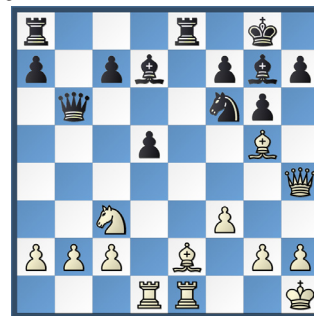
19.Rfe1 Qd6 20.Bc4! h6 21.Be3 Qb4 22.Bb3 g5 23.Qf2±

19...cxd5 20.Rfe1?!

20.Bd3 Rab8 21.b3=

20...Qb6

20...Qd6



Position after 20...Qb6

21.Bd3?

At this point I was in a serious time trouble. 21.Nxd5 Nxd5 22.Rxd5 Be6 23.Rb5 Qc6 24.Qe4 Qxe4 25.fxe4 c6 26.Rb7 Bxa2 27.Bd3 Be6=

21...h6! 22.Bxf6?

Allowing the two-bishops advantage was a serious and crucial mistake of the game. Taking the pawn on h6 instead would have left considerable chances associated with a potential sacrifice on g6. 22.Bxh6 Qxb2 (22...Bxh6 23.Qxh6 Qxb2 (23...Rxe1+ 24.Rxe1 Qxb2 25.Qd2 Rd8 26.h4) 24.Ne2! Rab8 25.Bxg6 fxg6 26.Qxg6+ Kh8 27.h3 Qb6 28.Nf4 Rxe1+ 29.Rxe1 Rg8 30.Qh6+ Nh7 31.Qh5 Rg5 32.Qf7 Qf6 33.Ng6+ Rxc6 34.Qxd7 Qd6 35.Re8+ Rg8 36.Re7 Qxd7 37.Rxd7 Rg6 38.Rxd5=) 23.Bd2 c5

22...Bxf6 23.Qxh6 c6!±

23...Rxe1+ 24.Rxe1 Qd6 (24...c6?? 25.Bxg6+) 25.Nd1

24.Qf4? Kg7 25.Na4 Qa5 26.Rxe8 Rxe8 27.Nc3 Bxc3?!

27...Qb6; 27...Be5

28.bxc3 Qxc3 29.Qc1?

This was the last straw. 29.h4!

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would have given White some chances on the king-side as Black's king is somewhat exposed. 29.h4! Be6 30.Kg1 c5 31.h5 c4 32.Bf1 gxf5 33.Qg5+ Kf8

29...c5! 30.Qa1?

30.Kg1 c4 31.Bf1 Be6 32.h4

30...Qxa1 31.Rxa1 c4+ 32.Bf1 Rb8 33.Rd1 Be6 34.Kg1 Rb2 35.Rc1 Rxa2 36.Be2 a5 37.Kf2 d4 38.Ke1 a4 39.Kd2 a3 40.Rb1 d3 41.Bd1 Rb2 42.Ra1 dxc2 43.Bxc2 Bf5

My opponent played well, took his chances and deserved the win. Congratulations to Brandon Jiang for winning the tournament with this game.

0-1

Same game, but this time annotated by the other player. —Editor.

**Timur Aliyev (2349) –
Brandon Jiang (2214) [C46]**
WA State, Championship
Redmond, WA (R9), February 20, 2023
[Brandon Jiang]

Going into this game, I knew it was a must-win for me. I was half-a-point behind Timur, who had been performing exceptionally well in the Championship section with five wins and three draws in the first eight rounds. He was the second-highest seeded player and only needed a draw to secure the Washington state championship. While a draw would secure me a second-place finish in the Championship section, I made the decision to play for a win.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 g6!

A risky move, but fit the last round situation.

4.d4 exd4 5.Nxd4 Bg7 6.Be3 d6!

Timur was expecting 6...Nf6. 6...Nf6 7.Qd2 0-0 8.0-0-0

7.Be2?!

This is not the most critical move. If White wants to have opening advantage, he must play Qd2 and 0-0-0.

7...Nf6 8.0-0-0

Mission accomplished. Based on the situation in the last round, we anticipated that White might opt for a less aggressive approach. Now the position is about equal, even I am out of preparation (my preparation mostly spent on White's

Qd2/0-0-0 setup). I felt this was a good sign for me.

9.f3 Re8 10.Qd2 d5 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Rad1 Qe7 13.Bg5 Qc5+ 14.Kh1 Be6 15.Na4 Qf8 16.Qf4 Qe7 17.Qh4 Bd7 18.Nc3 Qe6?!

18...Rab8 19.b3 h6 20.Be3 a5

19.exd5?!

19.Rfe1 Rab8 20.exd5 Qd6 21.Bc4

19...cxd5 20.Rfe1 Qb6 21.Bd3

21.Nxd5 Nxd5 22.Rxd5 Bc6 23.Rdd1 was his best chance to equalize.

21...h6 22.Bxf6 Bxf6 23.Qxh6 c6 24.Qf4 Kg7 25.Na4?

25.Qd6! Rad8 26.Rxe8 Bxe8 27.Qa3

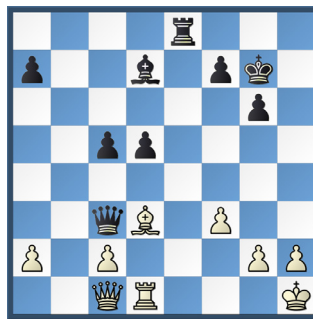
25...Qa5 26.Rxe8 Rxe8 27.Nc3 Bxc3?!

27...Qb6! 28.Qc1 Rb8

28.bxc3 Qxc3 29.Qc1?

29.h3

29...c5



Position after 29...c5

30.Qa1??

Queen-less endgame is helpless for White. 30.Kg1 White is worse, but he still has some chance to save the game.

30...Qxa1+

With the position in my favor, it was now the time for me to convert my advantage to a full point.

31.Rxa1 c4 32.Bf1 Rb8

32...Re3 33.Kg1 Re3 34.Rc1 Bf5

33.Rd1 Be6 34.Kg1 Rb2 35.Rc1 Rxa2 36.Be2 a5 37.Kf2 d4 38.Ke1 a4 39.Kd2 a3 40.Rb1 d3 41.Bd1 Rb2 42.Ra1 dxc2 43.Bxc2 Bf5

White resigned. I was so happy that I became the 2023 Washington State Champion!

0-1

Premier

Yevgeniy Rozenfeld, a software engineer at Microsoft based in Redmond, topped the Premier section with a solid score of 6.5 points. Rozenfeld started with 3.5 points from four games in the first weekend. A fifth-round loss against WFM Erin Bian was only a temporary setback, as Rozenfeld recovered well with three points from his final four games to keep his half-point lead over the field. Two Seattle chess kings, David Zhou and Joseph Frantz, split second/third place honors a half-point back with six points apiece. Middle school students Austin Liu of Sammamish and Erin Bian of Shoreline finished on plus two with 5.5 points each and tied for fourth/fifth place.

Player Bio: Eugene Rozenfeld

I was born in Kiev, Ukraine, and learned to play chess when I was five years old. At nine I started studying chess seriously with a coach at one of the local chess clubs and played almost every weekend in club and city tournaments. I was on the team from my school that won Kiev championship one year. I'm still very much in touch with the other three players from that team and one from an opposing team even though the five of us live in three different countries now.

I took a break from playing in tournaments when I started college in Ukraine but in a few years, after moving to the USA and resuming my studies at Cornell, I started playing in tournaments again. I've been playing in Pacific Northwest tournaments since 1999. During the pandemic I organized and captained a Microsoft team that won the CEA Online Corporate Championship twice beating teams from Amazon, Facebook, Boeing and other companies. I'm happy to be back to OTB tournaments after a two+ years break.

Washington Championship round-robin is my favorite local tournament. I played in the Premier section three times, taking third place, second place, and, finally, first place this year. I'm looking forward to playing in the Championship section for the first-time next year.

Player Bio: David Zhou

David started playing tournament chess after joining the McGill University chess team in 2012. In his first tournament, he won an individual gold on board four and established a rating of 1643 CFC. He played chess infrequently, and barely two years later, he won the World Open U1800 with a scant 27 tournament games under his belt. He reached his peak FIDE rating of 2141 after 87 lifetime classical games, having achieved a 2270 performance and a GM scalp in the strong nine-round Calgary International Classic. He is now working towards his next goal of obtaining the FM title.

Player Photo: Stephen Willy



**Stephen Willy (2017) –
Ted Wang (1972) [B22]**

WA State, Premier

Redmond, WA (R2), February 11, 2023

[Stephen Willy]

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nf6
5.Nf3 e6 6.Na3 Be7 7.Nb5

I had prepared this move with a Jobava London type of idea because it forces ...Na6 and keeps the knight in an annoying position for Black.

7...Na6 8.Be2 0-0 9.Ne5

This was an interesting move which if

it works I have a very active position, however Stockfish thinks after 9...cxd4, followed by 10...Qxg2 11.Bf3 Qh3 Black is better.

9...cxd4 10.cxd4

Rather than trading queens, I decide to keep more complications and life in the position.

10...Bb4+

10...Qxg2 11.Bf3 Qh3

11.Kf1

The king may look odd here but it's actually quite safe.

11...Qd8

He supports ...Nc7 as well as a waiting move for what my plan is.

12.Bd3

12.Bg5 Be7

12...Be7

Since both ...Qd8 and ...Be7 most likely would be needed anyways he doesn't give me opportunities to get free tempos (I also decided not to play Bg5 because it provokes ...Be7 anyways and after Nd5 the position would have been annoying for me) he also has ...Nb4 ideas I have to be very careful about.

13.h4 Nb4 14.Bb1

I decide to save the strong bishop on d3 and not worry too much about ...b6 ...Ba6 ideas, however the computer thinks I should have played Rh3 right away because now it thinks after ...Nc6 I don't have enough compensation for the IQP and king on f1.

14.Rh3 Nxd3 15.Qxd3

14...Bd7

14...Nc6

15.Nc3 Rc8

I felt like ...Rc8 is a slight waste of time as stuff is happening on the kingside.

16.Rh3 Nbd5

With two moves that waste too much time, the advantage has shifted from -1 to +0.8; the computer was still begging for ...Nc6.

17.Rg3 Kh8 18.Bg5 Be8

Somehow he has a fortress, so I decide to play Kg1 to avoid any attacks, checks, or back rank issues in the future (this was actually a very strong prophylactic move).

19.Kg1 Qb6

The computer immediately thinks Qd3 g6 Qd2 is +1.5 for me, however I didn't see how that helped my position. I thought I had a nice tactical idea so I played it.

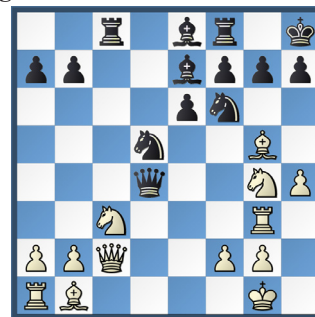
20.Qc2

20.Qd3 g6 21.Qd2

20...Qxd4

So I forgot d4 was hanging and the evaluation goes from +1.5 to -1.5.

21.Ng4



Position after 21.Ng4

Things start to become crazy as now I want to take on f6 and mate him and after g6 I was having some interesting thoughts about Nxd5, however that line just doesn't work.

21...Nb4

Well I guess Qe2 is forced. I was calculating 21...g6 22.Nxd5 Rxc2 23.Nxe7 Nxg4 24.Rxg4, but there are four ways that this fails 24...Qxf2+ (24...Qd1+ 25.Kh2 Rxf2; 24...Rc1+; 24...Qxb2)

22.Qe2

I am starting to get low on time so I am calculating fast Qc4 seemed natural to me however Nfd5 probably just makes the game a lot more simple for him.

22...Qc4

22...Nfd5

23.Qe1 Nfd5

And this already is a huge mistake that allows me to at least equalize.

24.Ne3 Qc5 25.Nexd5 Nxd5

I was looking at 26.Nxd5 Bxg5 27.Rc3, but I thought 26.Qe4 was a strong intermezzo because I thought ...f5 doesn't work because of Qxe6 and he would have to play g6 then Nxd5 with the same idea.

26.Qe4

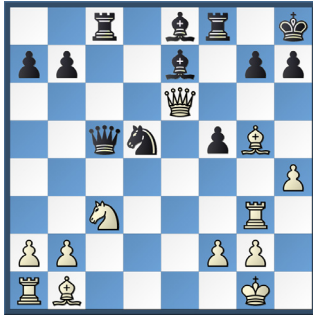
26.Nxd5 Bxg5 27.Rc3 Qa5 28.b4 Qd8

And somehow he this is fine for him.

26...f5

I was confused when I saw this I thought I could just take on e6 so I did. 26...g6 27.Nxd5 Bxg5 28.Rc3 Qd6 29.Rxc8 exd5. This would be Black's best try if ...g6.

27.Qxe6



Position after 27.Qxe6

27...Bf7

27...Bxg5 and he is better again, 27...Bc6 he maintains a slightly better position, 27...Rd8 and 27...f4 are around equal, and everything else is better for me.

28.Qxf5

Well I am pretty sure this works.

28...Bg6 29.Qxd5 Qxf2+ 30.Kh2 Rc5

After the game he said that he thought that 30...Rcd8 and 30...Bd6 worked, but if he were to play this I was unsure if Rf3 works or not (it does) and Bxe7 should just be better for me.

31.Bxe7

The simple move for time pressure.

31...Rxd5 32.Nxd5 Re8 33.Bxg6 hxg6 34.Rd1 Qf7 35.Bg5 Re2 36.Nf4 Rxb2 37.Rd6 Rb6 38.Rd8+ Kh7 39.Re3

1-0

Erin Bian (1994) –
Stephen Willy (2017) [B76]

WA State, Premier

Redmond, WA (R3), February 12, 2023
[Erin Bian]

1.e4 c5

Already this was a surprise: I had been expecting a Ruy Lopez. This was not the only time in this tournament I had been out of prep by move one...

2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6

I was glad to see this, as I am pretty

familiar with the lines in the Dragon.

6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 Nc6 8.Qd2 0-0 9.0-0-0 d5 10.Qe1 e5 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.exd5 Nxd5 13.Bc4 Be6 14.Kb1 Rb8 15.Ne4

Up until here everything was book for me. Stephen was also playing fast, so I suspect he had prepared this pretty deep ahead of time.

15...Qc7 16.Bc5 Rfd8 17.g4 a5 18.Bb3 h6

This makes ...f5 a possible idea by preventing ideas with Ng5. The last few moves were pretty natural, but now both sides need to find a plan.

19.Rg1 f5?!

Unknown to me at the time, everything up until Black's last move had been played before in Anand-Nakamura, 2018.

19...f5 is a reasonable idea, but dubious strategically as after 20.gxf5 Black is forced to take back with the bishop.

20.gxf5 Bxf5

20...gxf5? 21.Nf6+! Nxf6 (21...Kh8 22.Nh5+-) 22.Bxe6+ Kh8 23.Rxd8+ Rxd8 24.Bxf5+-

21.h4 Rb5

Provokes a4 and threatens to double rooks on the b-file. However, my queenside is solidly defended.

22.a4 Rb7 23.Ka2 Kh7 24.Ng3?

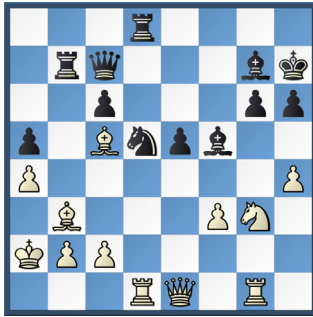
I assumed that Black would be forced to either allow an exchange on f5 or retreat the bishop to e6, but I was wrong. Here Stephen has a superb move that neither of us even considered during the game.



2023 Washington State Premier group photo:
(L-R) Joseph Frantz, David Zhou, Kai Pisan, Stephen Willy, Austin Liu, Vidip Kona, Yiding Lu, Erin Vian, Eugene Rozenfeld, and Ted Wang. Photo credit: Josh Sinanan.

Washington State Premier

Pairings#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals	Tie-break(S-B)	Place	Prize	Seeded into...
1	Yevgeniy Rozenfeld	2068	👑	0.5	1	1	0	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	6.5	27.25	1st	\$562.50	2024 WA State Championship
2	Austin Liu	2051	0.5	👑	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	1	0	5.5	21.25	=4th/5th	\$93.75	
3	Yiding Lu	2034	0	0	👑	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	8	=8th/9th		
4	Ted Wang	1972	0	0.5	0	👑	0.5	0	0.5	0	1	1	3.5	15.25	7th		
5	WFM Erin Bian	1994	1	0.5	1	0.5	👑	0.5	1	1	0	1	5.5	24.5	=4th/5th	\$93.75	
6	Joseph Frantz	1980	0	0.5	1	1	0.5	👑	0	1	1	1	6	22.5	=2nd/3rd	\$250.00	2024 WA State Invitational
7	Vidip Kona	1923	0.5	0	1	0.5	0	1	👑	0.5	1	0	4.5	17	6th		
8	Stephen Willy	2017	0	0.5	0	1	0	0	0.5	👑	1	0	3	10	=8th/9th		
9	Kai Pisan	1836	0.5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	👑	0	1.5	8.25	10th		
10	David Zhou	2050	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	👑	6	23	=2nd/3rd	\$250.00	2024 WA State Premier



Position after 24.Ng3

24...Nb4+?

This was a serious mistake: after the series of trades, Black is no longer able to get counterplay, while White has many targets to attack. 24...Bxc2!≠ This instantly equalizes, and, more importantly, gives a serious attack for Black that would be tough to defend. Of course, both sides must be extremely accurate here: the scale could easily tip with a single inaccurate move.

This position could be analyzed for a very long time, so I'll give just a few lines. 25.Bxc2 e4 26.Qxe4! Rxb2+ 27.Ka3 Rd6! (27...Ra2+! 28.Kxa2 Nc3+ 29.Ka3 Nxe4 30.Nxe4= Everything is forced. While Stockfish gives 0.00, both sides have a lot to play for here in this imbalanced position.) 28.Nh5 Nc3! 29.Rxg6! Believe it or not, every move after this is forced (the two "not-only" moves have their alternatives listed)—everything else is losing for either side! 29...Ra2+ 30.Kb3 Qb8+! 31.Qb4! Qg8+! 32.Re6+ Rxc2! 33.Nf6+ Bxf6 34.Qb7+ Kh8 35.Rdxd6 Rb2+! (35...Ne4!=) 36.Kxb2 Qg2+ 37.Kc1 (37.Bf2=) 37...Na2+ 38.Kb1 Nc3+ 39.Kc1 Na2+=

25.Bxb4 Rxd1 26.Qxd1 Rxb4 27.h5

Aims to quickly open up the kingside.

27...c5

Black tries to trap my bishop, but after c3 and Nxf5, I have the option of rerouting it to the b1–h7 diagonal with Bc2.

28.c3 Rb8 29.Nxf5 gxf5 30.Qd3?!

This makes my life a bit harder after 30...e4.

30.Qd5!+-

30...Rf8

30...e4! 31.fxe4?! was what I was planning: I had seen the following line and evaluated it as "better, maybe winning," but I hadn't realized how advantageous

my original position was. (31.Qd5!+-) 31...Rxb3! 32.Kxb3 c4+ 33.Qxc4 Qb6+ 34.Qb5! Qxg1 35.Qxf5+ Kh8 36.Qxa5+- In reality this is around +3, but perhaps Black can put up better resistance than in the game.

31.Be6 Kh8 32.Rg6 e4

An interesting try that I had overlooked, but luckily White is still winning.

33.fxe4 f4 34.Bf5 Qf7+ 35.Kb1 f3?!

With the f-pawn gone, it's hard to put up any real resistance. The rest isn't very interesting—I was probably slightly over-cautious, but I was able to get the job done.

36.Qxf3 Rb8 37.Qf4 Qf8 38.Qc7 Re8 39.Rxh6+ Kg8 40.Rg6 Kh8 41.Qxa5 Qf7 42.Qxc5 Qb3 43.Qd5 Qxa4 44.Qd7 Qxd7 45.Bxd7 Rxe4 46.h6 Bf8 47.Rf6 Be7 48.Rc6 Bf8 49.Bf5 Rf4 50.Bd3 Rf3 51.Kc2 Kg8 52.h7+ Kh8 53.Rc8 Kg7 54.b4 Rf7 55.b5 Kh8 56.b6 Kg7 57.Rc7 Be7 58.b7 Bd8 59.Rxf7+ Kh8 60.Rf8+

1-0

Player Bio: Joseph Frantz



Joseph Frantz has been active in the Seattle tournament chess scene since 2016. He is a published poet and lives in the University District.

Joseph Frantz (1980) – Vidip Kona (1923) [A61]

WA State, Premier
Redmond, WA (R3), February 12, 2023
[Joseph Frantz]

May 2023

1.d4 Nf6 2.e4 c5?!

2...e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bh4

3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Bf4 Bg7 8.Qa4+

I knew beforehand my opponent played the Benoni, so I looked at the "Asymmetrical Benoni" section of *Chess Structures* by Mauricio Flores Rios before the game, where the author says White scores 70% in this line. Good enough for me, I thought. It turns out that, unfortunately, you still have to know what you're doing.

8...Bd7 9.Qb3 Qc7 10.e4 0-0 11.Bd3 Nh5 12.Bd2 a6 13.a4 Bg4 14.Ng5?!



Position after 14.Ng5

I spent most of this game under the illusion that I was playing quite cleverly when I was mostly not. Here, I expected to answer 14...h6 with 15.h3 and have an advantage, but Stockfish thinks that's only even. 14.Be2 Nd7

14...Nd7

Oof. I realized that stopping 15...Ne5 with 15. f4 would mean that I could not play h3 without allowing Black's knight onto g3. 14...h6 15.h3 hxg5 16.hxg4 Nf4

15.f4?

15.f3

15...h6?!

15...b5 16.Be2 c4 17.Qc2 Bxe2 18.Nxe2 Nc5 19.0-0 Nf6 20.Ng3 Rae8 21.f5 h6 22.Nh3

16.Nf3

16.h3 hxg5 17.hxg4 Nxf4

16...Bxf3 17.gxf3

I felt that White's doubled pawns were a negligible disadvantage and that eventually I should be able to crash through in the center and be better.

17...Rfc8 18.Bc4

Wanting to lure Black's knight onto b6,

where it would be less useful than on d7.

18...Nb6?

18...b5 19.axb5 Bxc3 20.Qxc3 axb5 21.Rxa8 Rxa8 22.Be2 Ra1+ 23.Bd1 Qd8 24.0-0 b4 25.Qe3

19.Bf1 c4 20.Qc2 Nd7

20...Qe5 21.Bh3 Re8 22.a5 Nxd5 (22...Nc8) 23.Nxd5 Qxd5

21.Bh3 Qd8?

Part of me felt like this was a cheap threat to win a piece, but I realized I should make sure that castling kingside doesn't lead to serious problems after a bishop check on d4 followed by ...Qh4. I concluded I could always just move my king to g2 and be safe there. 21...Nc5 22.0-0 Re8 23.Kh1 Nd3 24.f5 g5 25.Be3 Nhf4 26.f6 Bxf6 27.Bf5 Re5 28.Bxf4

22.0-0 b5

22...Bd4+ 23.Kg2

23.axb5 axb5 24.Be3 b4 25.Ne2 Rxa1 26.Rxa1 f5?!

Stockfish thinks this is a mistake and that White should capture, but I felt like Black was trying to open the e-file for ...Qe7 and ...Re8 followed by aggressive minor piece moves where possible. And since I assumed I was better anyway, I felt no reason to capture.

26...b3

27.Ra6?!

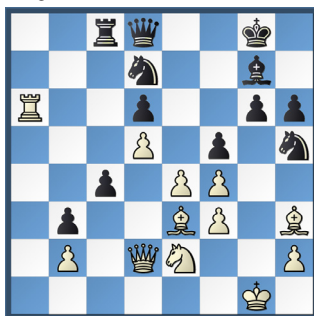
27.exf5 Qh4 28.Bg4 Qe7 29.Bf2 b3 30.Qd2 Nhf6 31.Bh3 g5 32.Ra7 Qe8 33.Bd4 Ra8

27...b3

27...Qh4 28.Bf1 b3 29.Qb1 Qe7 30.Rc6

28.Qd2??

28.Qc1 Qh4



Position after 28.Qd2

28...Qe7??

Stockfish thinks 28...c3 is best, but to

play that, Black would have to realize just how serious the promotion threats really are. 28...c3 29.Nxc3 Bxc3 30.bxc3 Ra8 31.Bf1 (31.Rxa8 Qxa8 32.Bf1 Qa1 33.c4 b2 34.Bd4) 31...Rxa6 32.Bxa6 Nxf4 33.Bxf4 Qb6+ 34.Be3 Qxa6 35.Bd4

29.e5??

I thought that Rxc6 would lead to the collapse of Black's position. 29.Rc6 Ra8

29...dxe5 30.Rxc6 exf4 31.Nxf4?

31.Bd4 Ne5 32.Bxe5 Qxe5 33.Rc6 Rd8 34.d6 Qb5 35.Rc7 Qb6+ 36.Kg2 Rxd6 37.Rc8+ Kf7

31...Ne5?!

Instead, it is my position which collapses. This tactic would have been hard to visualize in advance because the fork wasn't there until my rook was on g6 and because e5 was guarded until just now. I simply wanted to quit chess forever at this point. 31...c3

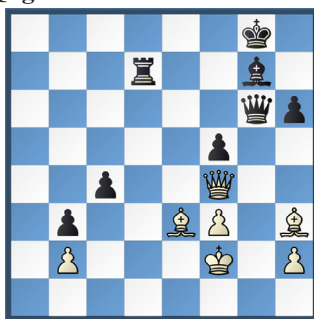
32.d6 Qf7 33.d7 Rd8 34.Qa5

I had calculated that this tactic still leaves me with a lost position, but couldn't find anything better, and didn't have a ton of time.

34...Rxd7 35.Qxe5 Nxf4 36.Qxf4

I had initially considered 36.Rxc6+, but realized now that the move loses because 36...Qxc6+ 37.Qxc6+ Rxc6+ leaves White down a rook. 36.Rg3 Nxf4+ 37.Rxf4; 36.Rxc6+ Qxc6+ 37.Qxc6+ Rxc6+ 38.Kf1

36...Qxc6+ 37.Kf1



Position after 37.Kf1

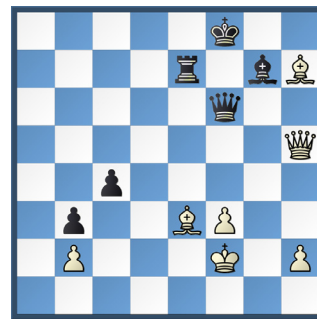
37...Qf7?!

I felt that this move needlessly let White back in the game. Black had to give up their c4- or f5-pawn, but the f5-pawn was much more important to hold onto, since without it White's chances for cheap tactics were much greater. 37...Rd1 38.Qxc4+; 37...Rf7

38.Bxf5 Rb7 39.Qg4 h5??

39...Qf6

40.Qg5 Qf6 41.Qxh5 41...Re7 42.Bh7+ Kf8



Position after 42...Kf8

43.Bc5??

Bizarrely, White's strongest move, leading to an engine draw, is Qg4. It would not have crossed my mind in an hour of thought that White would have a perpetual even a rook down, yet that is what Stockfish says: 43...Qxb2+ 44. Kf1! Rxe3 45. Qc8+, and White actually has a perpetual. Chess is very strange. 43.Qg4 Rxe3 (43...Qxb2+ 44.Kf1 Rxe3 45.Qc8+) 44.Kxe3 Qe5+ 45.Be4 Ke7 46.Qc8 Bh6+ 47.f4 Qxf4+ 48.Kd4 Bg7+ 49.Kd5 Qe5+

43...Qxb2+

43...Qg6

44.Kf1 Qe2+ 45.Kg1 Bd4+

The move I missed. I assumed this move was not possible, but liquidating bishops gives Black a won position.

46.Bxd4 Qd1+ 47.Kg2 Qxd4

I briefly thought this move gave White a perpetual before realizing it did not, but there was nothing better to do.

48.Qf5+ Rf7

48...Ke8 49.Qc8+ Kf7 50.Qf5+ Qf6 51.Bg8+ Kg7 52.Qh7+ (52.Qxf6+ Kxf6 53.Bxc4)

49.Qc8+ Kg7?!

49...Ke7 50.Qb7+ Kf6 51.Qc6+ Kg7 52.Qg6+ Kf8 53.Qg8+ Ke7 54.Qg5+ Kd6 55.Bg6 Rd7 56.Qa5

50.Qg8+?!

50.Be4 b2 51.Qg4+ Kf6 52.Qf4+ Ke6 53.Bf5+ Rxf5 54.Qxd4 b1Q 55.Qxc4+ Kd7 56.Qd4+ Kc6

50...Kf6 51.Kh3??

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Qg6+ was best. A blunder, but White is lost anyhow.

51.Qg6+ Ke7

51...Qd7+

0-1

Invitational

This year's Invitational section was dominated by two players, Dominic Colombo of Gig Harbor and Vihaan Jammalamadaka of Redmond, both of whom scored seven points and were crowned Co-Champions. Colombo, a junior at Gig Harbor High School, is off to a good start in 2023, already winning the New Year's Open in January as well as tying for first in the Invitational. Jammalamadaka, a fifth grader at Willow's Prep School in Redmond, continues to climb quickly and no doubt will become an expert very soon! Due to a rare situation in which both Colombo and Jammalamadaka have the same Sonneborn-Berger tiebreak score, the organizers decided to seed both young men into the 2024 Washington State Premier. Luca Tessiore of Seattle finished in third place half-a-point back with 6.5 points. A trio of players shared the fourth/fifth place prize with five points each: WCM Mary Kuhner of Seattle, Valentin Razmov of Seattle, and Varnika Jammalamadaka of Redmond.

Player Bio: Valentin Razmov



Valentin Razmov is a chess coach who helps both youth and adults, from beginner to advanced levels. His students have won awards in a number of regional competitions. Valentin himself returned to active tournament play in 2020, many years after being trained to expert level as a youth in Eastern Europe. He is a board member and tournament coordinator of Washington Chess Federation. Valentin regularly contributes to *Northwest Chess* magazine and is also the creator of the Puzzle Competitions at the Washington Open and Washington Class annual events. Interested students may visit his coaching page at https://www.chess.com/member/coach_valentin.

Valentin Razmov (1818) – Luca Tessiore (1945) [D38]

WA State, Invitational
Redmond, WA (R6), February 18, 2023
[Valentin Razmov]

This game was played in round 6, at which point both players had chances for a podium finish, so the end result mattered.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Bb4

First small opening surprise by Black.

5.Qa4+

After some contemplation, White decided not to follow the main lines after 5.Bg5, as the opponent was likely freshly prepared there. One of the ideas behind Qa4+ is that it forces Black's knight onto the c6-square, where it interferes (at least for some time) with the typical pawn break c7-c5.

5...Nc6 6.Bg5

By now White has taken a sideline of a sideline, so the game progresses without much effect of memorized lines from here onward. An alternative is to play more conventionally with 6.e3 0-0 7.Qc2 b6 (7...Re8 8.Bd2) 8.Bd2 but there isn't much opening benefit for White to expect here.

6...Bd7?!

Second opening surprise by Black. Although this is a normal move, it does not pose much challenge for White. 6...dxc4 seems more challenging for White, as in some variations White does not get their c-pawn back and plays for long-term positional compensation much in the style of Catalan openings: 7.e3 (7.e4 Bd7 8.Qc2 h6 9.Bd2 b5!? 10.Nxb5

Bxd2+ 11.Nxd2 a6 12.Na3 Nxd4 13.Qxc4 Bb5.) 7...Bd7 8.Qc2 b5 9.Be2 a6 10.0-0

7.Qb3 h6 8.Bxf6 Qxf6 9.e3 dxc4 10.Bxc4 0-0 11.0-0

After avoiding the more complicated opening lines (knowingly or unknowingly), the resulting position is only slightly better for White.

11...Qe7?!

By itself not a bad move, but the beginning of a wrong plan. Black was evidently more experienced in the classical QGD lines that continue with some c7-c5 pawn break, and here they seek that opportunity, even though it's not the best. 11...Bd6 instead moves the bishop away from any possible tactical strikes and keeps a solid position for Black.

12.Qc2

Side-stepping the obvious threat ...Na5.

12...Na5?!

By now it's evident that Black feels the urge to push c7-c5, so White looks for ways to capitalize on that manufactured urge. 12...Bd6 is still okay for Black.

13.Be2N

The first truly new move. White aims to clear the d-file and bring that bishop to the long diagonal h1-a8 in the long run.

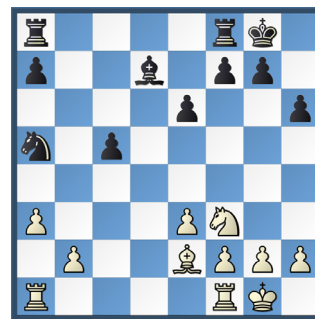
13...c5?±

Allowing White a long-term pressure on a pawn weakness. 13...Rac8 14.a3 Bd6 15.Rac1 Rfd8±

14.a3

Starting a forcing line...

14...Bxc3 15.Qxc3 b6 16.dxc5 Qxc5 17.Qxc5 bxc5±



Position after 17...bxc5

18.Rac1?!

Missing a strong and non-obvious way to put considerable positional pressure on Black, where despite the symmetrical

pawn structure Black's pieces would be harder to develop and connect properly. 18.b4! White overlooked this move, as they were too fixated at this point on the idea to exploit the c5-pawn weakness. 18...cxb4 (18...Nb7 19.Ne5 Rfd8 20.Ba6 Bc8 21.Rfd1± (21.Nc6 Rd7 22.Rfd1)) 19.axb4 Nb7 (19...Nc6?! 20.b5 Ne7 21.Ne5±) 20.Ne5 Be8 21.b5±

18...Rfb8 19.Ne5 Bb5

Practically required. Black offered a draw here, which White felt was a bit premature, so the play continued.

20.Bxb5

Played somewhat reluctantly...

Here White spent a long time evaluating instead the consequences of 20.Bf3!? Bxf1 including by sacrificing (temporarily) the exchange: 21.Kxf1! (21.Bxa8 Ba6 (21...Nb3 22.Rxf1 Rxa8 23.Rd1±) 22.Rxc5 Rxb2 23.f4±, and White does not gain much in that line.) 21...c4! 22.Rc3! A strong move that White missed while calculating—it supports the white rook while leaving Black without a particularly useful move to help untangle. This omission was the main reason for not taking the promising 20.Bf3 route. (22.Bxa8 Rxa8 23.Rc3 Rc8 24.b4 f6 25.Nd3 Nb7 26.Nc5 Nd6 27.Nxe6 Nb5±) 22...Rb5 23.Bxa8 Rxe5 24.a4! g5 25.g4 and although the resulting endgame position remains complicated, what is clear is that White plays for two results here.

20...Rxb5 21.a4!

Fighting for a positional advantage before Black has managed to fully consolidate.

21...Rxb2 22.Rxc5 Nb7 23.Rc7 f6?!

Clearly, Black wants to not lose their f7-pawn, but this move causes a considerable weakening of Black's king-side pawn structure, which was to persist throughout the endgame. 23...Nd6 24.Rd7 Ne4 25.Rxf7 Ra2 26.Re7 Rxa4 27.Rxe6 a5± Black has compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Still, it's always easier to sacrifice other people's pawns. ;-)

24.Nc6 Kh7?!

Apparently preparing to add a rook on g8 to protect the g7-pawn in the long-term, but this creates a bind on Black's pieces. 24...Nd8 25.Nxd8 (25.Ne7+ Kh7 26.h4) 25...Rxd8 26.Rxa7 Ra2 27.h3 Rdd2 28.g4±

25.Nd4 Nd8 26.Rfc1?!

The idea of a strong rook presence

on the seventh rank is correct, but its realization here is bit rushed. It was better to fix Black's weaknesses first: 26.h4! a5 27.h5±

26...e5 27.Nf5 Ne6 28.Re7 Rb6?!

28...Rc8! gains a tempo instead, bringing Black's second rook to a more active position quickly: 29.Rd1 Rd2 30.Rf1 Kg6 (30...Rc6 31.g4) 31.g4 Rc6 32.Kg2±

29.g4! a5

Black spent 40 minutes here, looking for practical chances, and apparently found something unexpected.

30.Rd1 Rg8 31.Rdd7!

Black is in a bind. Almost a zugzwang situation.

31...Nc5!?

Objectively perhaps not the best option, according to the engines, but this move offers Black an excellent chance—both psychologically (suddenly Black gains apparent activity in exchange for a pawn) and practically (in the opponent's mild time trouble: White had 11 minutes left to complete the next nine moves.

32.Rxg7+?!

It's hard to resist the temptation of capturing material—especially gaining extra material—with check. 32.Rc7! Ne6 (32...Nxa4? 33.Nxg7+-) 33.Ra7 Kg6 34.h4 h5 35.Red7!+- threatening Ne7+

32...Rxg7 33.Rxg7+ Kh8 34.Ra7 Rb4 35.Ra8+

Repeating the position once while calculating options...

35...Kh7 36.Ra7+ Kh8 37.Rxa5?!



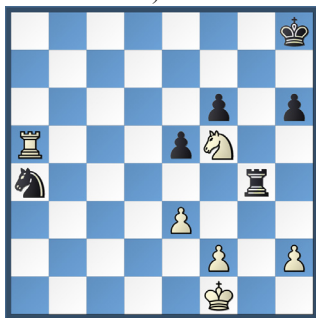
Washington State Invitational

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totalpts	Tie-break(S-B)	Place	Prize	Seeded into...
1	WCM Mary Kuhner	1866	👑	1	0.5	0	1	1	0	1	0.5	0	5	18.75	=4th/6th	\$50.00	
2	Dominic Colombo	1972	0	👑	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	1	1	1	7	27.25	=1st/2nd	\$350.00	2024 WA State Premier
3	Valentin Razmov	1818	0.5	0	👑	0.5	1	0	0	1	1	1	5	15.25	=4th/6th	\$50.00	
4	Luca Tessiore	1945	1	0.5	0.5	👑	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	6.5	23.5	3rd	\$150.00	2024 WA State Invitational
5	Michael Shapiro	1721	0	0	0	0	👑	0	0	1	1	1	3	6.5	8th		
6	Varnika Jammalamadaka	1736	0	0.5	1	0	1	👑	0.5	1	1	0	5	17.5	=4th/6th	\$50.00	
7	Vihaan Jammalamadaka	1879	1	0	1	1	1	0.5	👑	1	0.5	1	7	27.25	=1st/2nd	\$350.00	2024 WA State Premier
8	Michael Lin	1740	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	👑	0	0	0	0	10th		
9	Vijay Patankar	1722	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	1	👑	0.5	2.5	8	9th		
10	Edward Cheng	1815	1	0	0	0.5	0	1	0	1	0.5	👑	4	14.5	7th		

With six minutes for four moves till the time control, White starts to err and spill their advantage. 37.Nxh6 Rxa4 38.Nf7+ Kg8 39.Nh6+ Kh8 40.Kg2± would offer better endgame conversion chances, but White was unsure how dangerous Black's a-passer could become, and didn't want to take the risk on it.

37...Rxc4+ 38.Kf1 Nxa4?

We're now at the second critical moment of the endgame. A correct plan by White would win—but it requires finding an only move to start that plan; an incorrect plan gives Black excellent drawing chances, as demonstrated in the game. Can you spot the correct winning plan (and best first move) for White?



Position after 38...Nxa4

39.f3?

After some contemplation and with just one minute left for the final move, White errs and loses their last winning chance. 39.Ra6! The winning idea is to focus on the f6-pawn weakness, not h6—even if the latter is more apparent and “the lower hanging fruit.” The white knight on f5 is dominant and should not leave its outpost—otherwise, Black's king activates and White's win evaporates. 39...h5 (39...Rg6?? 40.Rxa4) 40.Rxf6 Rg5 41.h4 Rg4 42.Rh6+ Kg8 43.Re6 Kf7 44.Rxe5+-

39...Rb4

Here Black offered a second draw, and rightfully so. Plus, the chance of a correct assessment by White with just one minute to go is relatively small.

40.Nxh6?!

White plays on auto-pilot... At least two other move options were relatively better: 40.Ra6! Nb6 41.Kg2±; 40.Kg2 Nc3 41.Ra6!±

40...Nb6 41.Ra2?!

After spending 15 minutes to build an endgame plan, White decides to bet on

ensuring the forward path of their king, rather than allowing ...Rb2 to limit its mobility. Although this is a typical and valuable endgame idea, concretely in this position it wasn't the best. 41.Nf5! would have properly continued White's fight for a win: 41...Rb2 (41...e4 42.f4 Rb2 43.h4 Nc4 44.Rc5 Nd2+ 45.Ke1 Nf3+ 46.Kd1 Rd2+ 47.Kc1 Rh2 48.Rc6 Nxh4 49.Nxh4 Rxh4 50.Rxf6±) 42.h4! Kh7 (42...e4 43.fxe4 Nc4 44.Ra6 Kh7) 43.Rc5 Kg6 44.e4 Rd2 45.Rc7 Rd7±; The R+3P vs R endgame after 41.Nf7+ Kg7 42.Nxe5? fxe5 43.Rxe5 Nc4 looked interesting theoretically, but not promising for White. So White rejected that option.

41...Nd5 42.Nf5 Kh7 43.Rg2 Rb1+ 44.Kf2 Rb2+ 45.Kg3 Rxc2+!

White was hoping to be able to increase their piece activity in the knight endgame, but here Black's king and knight are first to reach that goal, which ensures the drawn outcome of the game.

46.Kxg2 Kg6 47.e4 Nf4+ 48.Kg3 Kh5 49.Ne3

White tries for a bit longer, but the draw is never in doubt anymore.

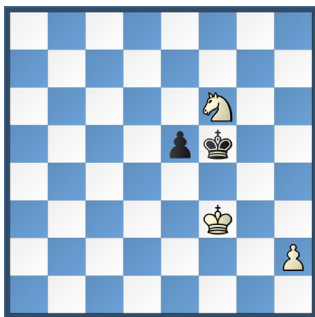
49...Ne2+ 50.Kf2 Nd4 51.Ng4 Kg5 52.Ke3 Nc2+ 53.Kf2 Nd4 54.Ne3 Kf4 55.Nd5+ Kg5 56.Ne7

56.h4+ Kxh4 57.Nxf6 Kg5

56...Kf4 57.Ng6+ Kg5 58.Nh8 Kh6

58...f5

59.Nf7+ Kg6 60.Nd6 Kg5 61.Ke3 Nc2+ 62.Ke2 Nd4+ 63.Ke3 Nc2+ 64.Kf2 Nd4 65.Kg3 Ne2+ 66.Kg2 Nd4 67.Nc4 Kf4 68.Nd2 Ke3 69.Nf1+ Kf4 70.Ng3 Nxf3 71.Nh5+ Kxe4 72.Nxf6+ Kf5 73.Kxf3!



Position after 73.Kxf3

Congratulations to Luca on his fantastic defense in the second part of the game.

½-½

Player Bio: Varnika Jammalamadaka



Varnika is an eighth grader and started playing chess when she was four years old. She is currently placed in the top 20 girl players for Age 14 at the national level (US Chess). She recently tied for second place in the Washington Women's Championship held in September 2022, and won second place in K-12 Girls Championship of Susan Polgar Foundation National Open in October 2022. Her other interests include writing (published article in *Chess Life Kids* magazine), playing the piano, and creative art and design.

Player Bio: Dominic Colombo



Dominic Colombo began playing competitive chess in 2013 at the age of eight, after finally convincing his dad to teach him the game two years earlier. Since then, he has competed in many tournaments and currently holds the US Chess rating of 1936. He won the grade-level state championship for Georgia twice before moving. He became the Washington high school state co-champion in 2021 and recently he won the Seattle New Year's Open. He currently studies under NM Dominique Myers from the Charlotte Chess Center. Dominic is also an assistant teacher at St. Nicholas Catholic School in Gig Harbor.

Dominic Colombo (1972) – Vihaan Jammalamadaka (1879) [B29]
WA State, Invitational
Redmond, WA (R8), February 19, 2023
[Dominic Colombo]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5

A very offbeat line that came up in preparation.

4.exd5 Nxd5 5.Bb5+ Bd7 6.Ne5 Nf6

The best move, other natural moves like ...Bxb5 do not work due to tactics. 6...Bxb5 7.Qf3 f6 8.Nxb5 fxe5 9.Qxd5 Qxd5 10.Nc7+ Kf7 11.Nxd5 While the position is still even, White is practically better due to a better pawn structure and more king safety.

7.Qf3 Qc8

Required to guard the b7 pawn. 7...Bxb5 8.Qxb7

8.Nxd7 Nbx7 9.d3 e6

9...a6 would have been a slight improvement to release some of the tension in Black's position.

10.Bg5 Be7 11.h4

With the idea of breaking down Black's kingside while maintaining the flexibility of castling in either direction.

11...a6 12.Bxd7+ Qxd7 13.h5 Nd5

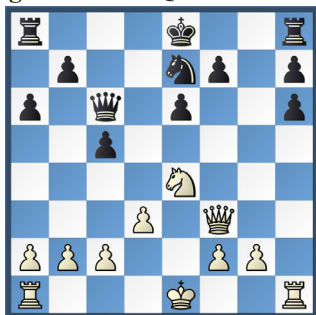
...Nd5 is an inaccuracy. It allows White to break down Black's kingside position. ...h6 would have been much better, and it would have likely led to a position seen in the following line where I liked my attacking chances: 13...h6 14.Bh4 0-0 15.0-0-0 b5 16.g4

14.Bxe7 Nxe7

Taking with the queen would have been better. It may have led to the following

line where White's activity may make him slightly better. 14...Qxe7 15.Nxd5 exd5+ 16.Kf1 0-0-0 17.Re1 Qd7 18.Rh4

15.h6 gxh6 16.Ne4 Qc6



Position after 16...Qc6

17.Nf6+

Qf6 would have been better than Nf6. I struggled with the decision of whether to trade the queens or keep them on the board, but I decided to trade them because I thought the resulting endgame would be better for me and easier to convert. The resulting variations show that White is better, but Black is able to safely castle. 17.Qf6 Rf8 (17...Rg8 18.Rxh6 Rxc2 19.Rxh7) 18.0-0-0 Nd5 19.Qg7 0-0-0 20.Rxh6

17...Kd8 18.Qxc6 Nxc6 19.Rxh6 Ke7 20.0-0-0 Nd4 21.Ne4

To avoid ...Nf5 where the white knight will have trouble getting out. 21.Rdh1 Nf5 22.Rxh7 Rxh7 23.Nxh7 Rg8

21...f5 22.Nd2

Nf6 or Nxc5 would have been improvements but I missed Nf6 and planned to reroute my knight to the queenside. The activity Black got after Nxc5 felt unnecessary. 22.Nf6; 22.Nxc5 Rac8 23.Nb3 Nxc2 24.Kb1 Nb4

22...Rag8 23.g3 Rg6 24.Rdh1

Rh5 would have been better to avoid the trade of rooks. The two rooks ending is easier to maintain an advantage. 24.Rh5 h6

24...Kf7??

After Rxh7 Black is down a pawn and lacking activity. If Black trades rooks he will still be worse due to activity, but the material is equal and Black should be able to hold a draw. 24...Rxh6 25.Rxh6 Kf7 26.c3 Kg7 27.Rh4 Nc6

25.Rxh7+ Rxh7 26.Rxh7+ Rg7

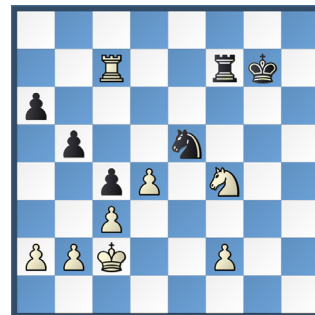
I avoided the trade of rooks because the rook ending would be much simpler to

convert than a minor piece endgame.

27.Rh4 e5 28.c3 Nc6 29.Nc4 Kg6 30.Ne3 Rd7 31.Kc2 b5 32.Rh8

An important move. Now the white rook will infiltrate, and Black's pawns will begin to fall.

32...f4 33.gxf4 exf4 34.Ng2 Ne5 35.Nxf4+ Kg7 36.Rc8 c4 37.d4 Rf7 38.Rc7



Position after 38.Rc7

The simplest way to convert.

38...Nd7

The rook cannot take due to the following line which is easily winning. White is up two pawns and the a6 and b5 pawns will fall as well. 38...Rxc7 39.Ne6+ Kf7 40.Nxc7

39.Ne2

39.Ne6+ is interesting as well, but Nd2 and f4 to secure the two-pawn advantage was simpler.

39...Kf8 40.f4 Ke7 41.Ra7 Rf6 42.Kd2 Kd8 43.Ra8+ Kc7 44.Rh8

I moved my rook to the kingside to avoid any possible rook traps with Nb8.

44...Nb6 45.Rh5 Kc6 46.Ke3 Nd5+ 47.Ke4 Nc7

47...Re6+ 48.Re5 Now the point of Rh5 becomes clear.

48.f5 Rf8 49.Rh6+ Kd7 50.Nf4 a5

50...Re8+ does not keep the king from advancing due to the following line. The king could also reroute by going through f3 and then g4. 51.Ne6 Nxe6 52.fxe6+ Rxe6+ 53.Rxe6 Kxe6 54.d5+

51.Ke5

Rh7+ would have been an improvement as it wins a piece, but I did not see it and was planning to bring the king forward. 51.Rh7+ Kd6 52.Rxc7 Re8+ 53.Ne6

51...b4 52.Rh7+

He resigned because of the following line

where Black has no more counterplay or tricks. 52...Kc6 (52...Kd8 53.Rxc7 Re8+ 54.Kd6) 53.Rxc7+ Kxc7 54.Ne6+ Kb6 55.Nxf8

1-0

Player Bio: Vihaan Jammalamadaka



Vihaan is ten years old and thoroughly enjoys playing chess. He is currently placed in the top 50 players for Ages 11 and under worldwide (FIDE), and in the top 30 players for Age ten at the national level (US Chess). He recently won first place in the Washington Blitz Championship held in October 2022. He placed third in the North American Youth Chess Championship in Under-ten category in August 2022, competing among top players from three continents for the title. He has also been the Washington State Elementary Chess Champion in 2022 (fourth grade), 2021 (third grade), 2019 (first grade) and 2018 (kindergarten). He was the US Chess K-12 National Scholastic Co-Champion in first grade, won eighth place in second grade, and 16th place in fourth grade. His other interests include outdoor sports such as basketball, soccer, football, and cricket.

Challengers

Albert Eksarevskiy, an eighth-grade student from Willows Prep. School in Redmond, emerged victorious in the youthful Challengers section with an impressive six points from eight games.

Due to the withdrawal of AFM Sridhar Seshadri after the first weekend due to illness, the Challengers section was reduced to eight rounds instead of nine for all players except those who had already played Seshadri. Along the way, Albert drew two cautious games against his nearest rivals Yondon and Boulis and won several of his games in fine style. For his victory, Albert is seeded into the 2024 Washington State Invitational, though his swift progress may propel him to an even higher section. Odbayar Yondon of Redmond captured second place a half-point back with 5.5 points. Freshmen sensations Emerson Wong-Godfrey of Seattle and Christos Boulis of Redmond split third/fourth place honors with 4.5 points apiece. Amana Demberel of Seattle and Shuyi Han of Bellevue earned the fifth place prize with an even four points.

Player Bio: Gabriel Razmov



Gabriel Razmov is an avid chess player, the 2022 Washington Chess960 Co-Champion, and an accomplished puzzle solver. He is a student liaison for WA Chess Federation, who often volunteers at local events. Gabriel regularly contributes annotated games to *Northwest Chess* magazine and can be reached at https://www.chess.com/member/brilliant_knight.

**Gabriel Razmov (1574) –
Amana Demberel (1589) [B85]**

WA State, Challengers
Redmond, WA (R7), February 19, 2023
[Gabriel Razmov]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6

The French Variation of the Sicilian.

3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6

Transposing into a sharp Scheveningen line.

6.Be2 Be7 7.Be3 a6 8.0-0 0-0 9.a4

One of the more common moves. This is played to prevent (or at least make harder) Black's possible ...b5 next move, which would threaten to displace the c3-knight, in turn making White's center much less stable.

9...Qc7 10.f4 Nc6 11.Bf3 e5

A good central break. If this isn't played soon enough, White can simply steamroll Black via Qd2, g4, Qg2, h4, and then g5. The resulting position is sometimes defensible, but it poses a much harder task for Black.

12.Nf5

12.Nde2 was another good choice. After 12...Na5 13.Bf2 Bd7 (13...exf4?! 14.Nxf4 and now White has good control over the d5-square and d6 is a backward pawn.) 14.f5 White retains a good position. Black will play for ...b5 and/or ...d5.

12...Bxf5 13.exf5 exf4 14.Bxf4 Qb6+?!

A natural choice, but an incorrect one. Black cannot take the pawn, as analysis shows, and it only helps White's king move onto a better diagonal. 14...Ne5 would have been a much better choice. If White is to retain the two bishops, he might try 15.Be4 but after 15...Neg4 16.Kh1 Qb6 17.Qf3 Nxe4 18.Qxe4 Qxb2 19.Qf3! Ne5 20.Qg3 Bh4! seems to save the day for Black. 21.Qh3 Rac8 22.Nd5 Bd8±

15.Kh1 Ne5?

15...Qxb2? wouldn't work due to 16.Qd2 Qb6 17.g4± White is much better as he has a strong kingside attack.; 15...Rad8 is a much better try, though 16.Ra3! is a very interesting attempt, and definitely best here. It must be answered by an only move (The obvious choice 16.Nd5 isn't so good: 16...Nxd5 17.Bxd5 Nb4 18.Bb3 Bf6± Black should be fine here.) 16...d5 17.Rb3 Qd4 Black can try to hold on here, but White is clearly much better.

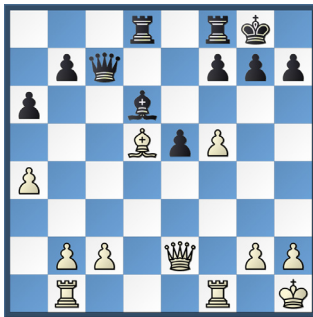
16.Bxe5?

The first big mistake of the game. 16.Nd5! and White stands clearly better. After 16...Nxd5 17.Bxd5 Rac8 18.b3± White's position is very solid and he can easily play for a win here. Black doesn't have a great plan in this position.

16...dxe5 17.Rb1 Rad8 18.Qe2 Bd6?

Black returns the favor, and White responds correctly. 18...Rd4 19.Rfd1 Rxd1+ 20.Qxd1 Rd8 21.Qe2 Rd4.

19.Nd5 Nxd5 20.Bxd5 Qc7?



Position after 20...Qc7

After this mistake, Black is nearly losing. He may not allow 21.f6 with decisive effect. 20...Be7 keeps holding on, though White is still clearly on the offensive. 21.c4 Qf6±

21.f6 g6 22.Qe3?!

A slight slip. 22.Qe4! is a slightly better choice. Now after 22...Rd7 23.c4 White can also expand on the queenside; Black is very much tied up and is close to being positionally lost.

22...Rfe8 23.Bb3?

A serious mistake that hands Black the advantage with accurate defense. As White wastes a tempo in defending his bishop, his initiative evaporates. 23.Qe4 would still work—after 23...b5 24.h4 Kh8 25.axb5 axb5 26.Rbd1± White's position remains clearly better, though there is a lot still to play.

23...Bf8 24.Rf3?

White is already committed to the attack, so he naturally pursues it. But here, White should instead take a step back and choose a more solid approach. At this point, White might have been taken aback by suddenly allowing Black defensive chances, so he was acting out of emotion. 24.Qe4 again works out for White. After 24...Qc6 25.Rbe1 White doesn't have much of an attack any more, but still has a decent position.

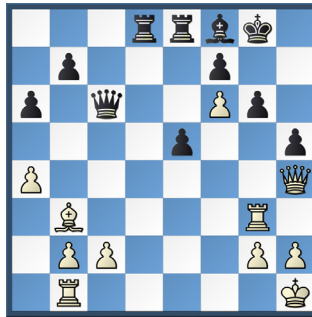
24...Qc5?

Allowing White to climb back into the game, and after missing his earlier chances when Black showed resourcefulness, White grabs his last chance to equalize. 24...e4! would put White in some trouble, as 25.Rff1 Qe5!± and now Black has the more active pieces.

25.Qe4 Qc6 26.Qh4 h5?

Black cracks under pressure and now White has an advantage and initiative. 26...Rd4 and after the line 27.Bxf7+ Kxf7 28.Qxh7+ Ke6± a very unclear and interesting position arises where Black should be slightly better in the long run.

27.Rg3



Position after 27.Rg3

27...Re6?!

Missing the only defense. The tricky 27...Kh8! saves Black, as even after 28.Rg5 Bh6! 29.Bxf7 Qxc2! Black will have chances, though White is still the one seeking the full point. 30.Re1 Bxg5 31.Qxg5 Kh7! 32.Bxe8 Rxe8 33.h3±

28.Bxe6 Qxe6 29.Rf1?

White didn't miss the instant win, but wanted to build up to it. This mistake isn't a serious one, as White is still winning even with best defense. 29.Rxg6+! would be a slightly better choice. 29...fxg6 30.f7+ Qxf7 31.Qxd8

29...Bh6?

Now, White's tactic comes with even more decisive effect. 29...Rd4 30.Qxh5 Rxa4 31.Qe2+- is the best Black has, but as is clear, White is still winning.

30.Rxg6+!

Here Black resigned, seeing that after 30...fxg6 31. f7+ White will win the queen or promote the pawn. After the objectively best 30...Kh7, White can simply retreat 31.Rg3 and the material advantage, coupled with the exposed black king, should win easily.

1-0

Player Bio: Albert Eksarevskiy

Hello, I'm a 14-year-old chess player living in Redmond, Washington.



*Albert Eksarevskiy, shortly after winning the Challengers section.
Photo credit: Ani Barua.*

I learned the game at a young age from my parents, but unfortunately did not play very frequently. However, when COVID started, a few of my friends and my older brother encouraged me to take up chess more seriously again. I quickly fell in love with this beautiful game, and today enjoy it every day as my biggest hobby, whether through studying, playing online games, or going to OTB events. I absolutely love the environment at chess tournaments, and enjoy playing blitz in between rounds, analyzing games, talking to friends, and meeting new people. I am excited to continue improving in the future and am looking forward to many more tournaments to come!

**Emerson Wong-Godfrey (1720) –
Albert Eksarevskiy (1670) [B10]**

WA State, Challengers
Redmond, WA (R8), February 19, 2023
[Albert Eksarevskiy]

Going into this game, I was trailing the leader by half-a-point (playing him in the last round). This was therefore a very important game for my tournament, and also for my opponent (who is a good friend of mine and, in my opinion, a very formidable opponent for me).

1.e4 c6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6

Prior to the game, I did some preparation for the two knights since it seemed to be something my opponent consistently played (but rarely this line).

4.e5 Ne4 5.Bd3

5.Nxe4 dxe4 6.Ng5 Qd5 7.Qe2 Bf5 8.g4 Bg6 9.Bg2 Qxe5 10.Nxe4 h5 I was hoping that we would enter this kind of position, where Black has active play and

I would likely be more familiar with some of the key plans.

5...Nc5

I briefly looked at Bd3 while preparing and just saw that ...Nc5 was the move—my preparation ended here. I was expecting something like 6.Be2 d4 7.b4 dxc3 8.bxc5 cxd2+ 9.Bxd2 where I thought that it would be a fairly equal game with play for both sides.

6.Qe2

An inaccuracy, although not so simple to capitalize on. The thematic 6...Bg5 would have arguably been a better alternative to what I chose in the game, since it is not so easy for White to develop while Black has a pretty clear plan to continue into the middlegame.

6...Nxd3+ 7.Qxd3 e6 8.Ne2

An interesting move to try and play c3, Qc2, and then d4 for White to finally develop his pieces to natural squares.

8...c5

Freeing up the c6-square for my knight and gaining space in the center.

9.c3 Nc6 10.0-0 Be7

10...g5! would have been an interesting try instead of what I chose in the game and is recommended by the engine. Black's king is fairly safe, and Black has pretty clearly better development so can afford to go on a kingside attack with the pawn storm.

11.a3 c4

I opted for c4, gaining space with tempo

and creating some potential outposts on b3 and d3. This does come at the cost of weakening the d4-square. After 12.Qe3 I intended to castle and then play ...f6 in thematic Caro-Kann fashion. However, after Qe2 some interesting complications ensued. 11...b6 would have been a good way to develop the light-squared bishop, and after a move like Qc2 Black could continue with ...Ba6 with a more comfortable position.

12.Qc2 Qc7

Hitting the e5-pawn, which is not so easy for White to hang on to.

13.d4 Na5?!

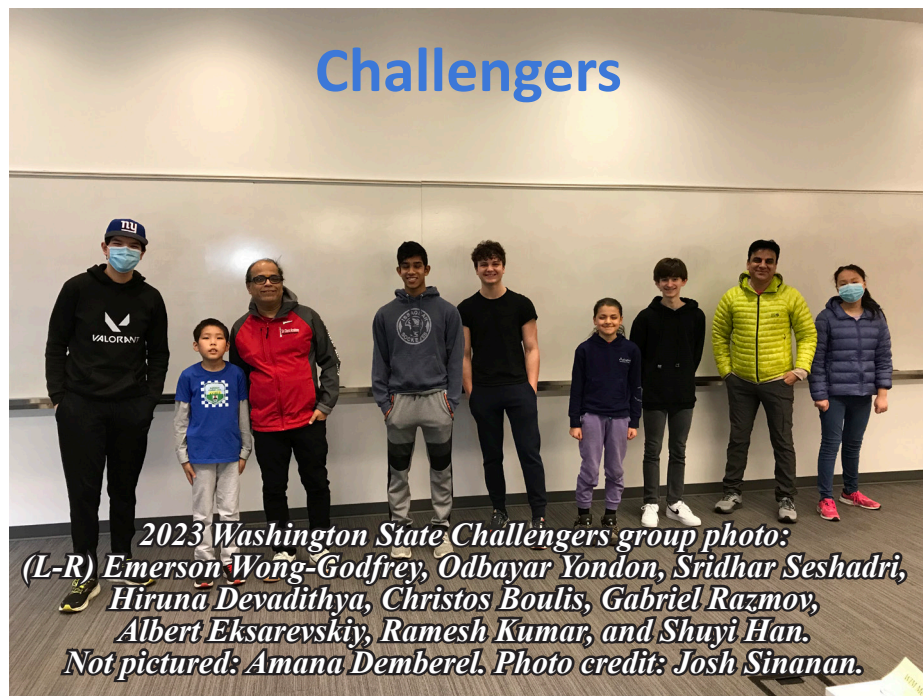
13...cxd3 Both my opponent and I spent a lot of time evaluating this move. While it does win a pawn and is favored by the engine, we both felt that the complications were a bit too much for Black to deal with during the game. 14.Qxd3 Nxe5 15.Nxe5 Qxe5 16.Bf4 Qe4 17.Qb5+ Kf8 felt a bit sketchy to me, but is approved by the engine.

14.Bg5

A good move by my opponent which I actually overlooked. It makes a lot of sense to try and trade off the dark-squared bishop since it strands Black with the bad bishop, while White no longer has to concern himself with the dark-squared pawn complex blocking in his.



Position after 14.Bg5



Washington State Challengers

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals	Tie-break(S-B)	Place	Prize	Seeded into...
1	Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1720	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	4.5	14	=3rd/4th	\$93.75	
2	Odbayar Yondon	1638	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	5.5	19.25	2nd	\$187.50	2024 WA State Challengers
3	Amana Demberel	1589	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	4	13.25	=5th/6th	\$18.75	
4	Shuyi Han	1620	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	4	15.75	=5th/6th	\$18.75	
5	Gabriel Razmov	1574	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	3.5	13.75	7th		
6	Ramesh Kumar	1574	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	3	9.5	8th		
7	Christos Boulis	1687	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	4.5	17	=3rd/4th	\$93.75	
8	Albert Eksarevskiy	1670	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	6	21	1st	\$337.50	2024 WA State Invitational
9	Hiruna Devadithya	1550	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	1	3.5	9th		
10	AFM Sridhar Seshadri	1611	♔	♕	♖	♗	♘	♙	♚	♛	♜	♝	0	0			

14...Nb3?!

I decided to throw in this move first. However, I could have instead traded and gone ...f6 for a more comfortable position. Alternatively, the “Petrosian-esque” move would have been to play 14...Bf8, which I briefly considered but could not bring myself to play because I thought it might give White too much activity (I now realize that the bishop on g5 is not doing very much anyways).

15.Ra2?!

A move which I think ended up turning the tide towards my position. Better would have been 15.Re1 or Rd1, but my opponent likely did not like this due to the idea of going ...Bd7 and ...a5 ...a4 (or ...Ba4) for Black. My reasoning was similarly flawed.

15...Bxg5 16.Nxg5 Bd7

Eventually intending ...Ba4, which my opponent thus prevented.

17.a4 h6 18.Nf3 Qa5

Trying to be greedy by capturing the a4-pawn and going b5. 18...0-0-0 19.Nf4 Kb8= Since my queenside is quite safe and Black has a comfortable amount of space, queenside castling was another interesting move which I didn't consider enough during the game. One tricky idea in this line would be Nh5 for White, where my g-pawn turns out to be a bit weak combined with the idea of Qh7.

19.Nc1 Nxe1

19...Bxa4 20.Nxb3 cxb3 21.Qxb3 Bxb3 22.Rxa5 b6 23.Ra3 Bc4 24.Rfa1 a5 I considered going for this endgame, but was a bit concerned about where I would put my bishop later on and didn't think this was super comfortable (especially with ideas like b4 for White).

20.Rxc1 b5

Exploiting the pin.

21.b4?! cxb3 22.Qxb3 bxa4 23.Qa3 Qd8

With the intention of ...Qe7 to trade the queens and maybe try to hold on to my extra pawn. Otherwise, I would be in quite an uncomfortable position since I could not easily castle. It is important to note that, while I do have "extra material" here, the doubled a-pawns are not so strong here with White's blockading pieces and my bad bishop is still not doing me favors.

24.c4?!

May be another step in the wrong direction, since it potentially opens some lines for my bishop and isn't exactly doing very much for White. A better plan which I thought might have given me some trouble is Ne1, with the intention to reroute the knight to a square like c5.

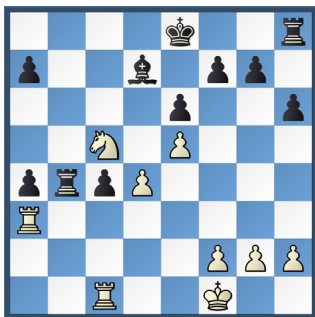
24...dxc4 25.Nd2 Qe7 26.Ne4

26.Nxc4 Qxa3 27.Rxa3 Ke7 28.Nd6. would actually not be so clear since my pieces feel a bit tangled.

26...Qxa3 27.Rxa3 Rb8

Taking advantage of White's weak back rank. Now that I have ...Rb4 on the cards, it makes holding onto at least one of my extra pawns much easier.

28.Nc5 Rb4 29.Kf1?!



Position after 29.Kf1

While this move makes natural sense to try and get the king away from back rank threats and closer to the passed pawns, it actually allows me to finally get a fairly active square for my bishop with ...Bb5, having some additional threats with the lined up diagonal. 29.Rca1 is better and not even close to clear despite what the engine may say would have been this move. This actually leads to a very interesting, study-like endgame which I certainly was not calculating in this

much depth during the game but am very curious in post-mortem. 29...a5 30.Nxa4 Bxa4 31.Rxa4 c3 pushing the passer since the a-pawn is going to be lost anyways. 32.Rxa5 c2 33.Rf1 The only move which does not instantly lose. Here, Black has to be very careful with how he continues. Rxd4 is the simplest but is actually quite easy to mess up with just one wrong move. Even more interesting, however, is the awesome computer-given line: 33...Rb2 34.Ra7 Kd8!! Is the only clearly winning move, preventing the pesky Rc7. Of course, if Ra8+ is played, the black rook cannot be taken in lieu of Rb1 followed by unstoppable queening. 35.f4 Rb1 36.Ra1 Rxa1 37.Rxa1 Kd7 38.Kf2 Rc8 39.Rc1 Rc4 40.Ke3 Kc6 41.Ke4+ where the endgame is simply winning for Black.

29...Bb5 30.Rcc3 Rb3

A nice tactic enabling the exchange of at least one pair of rooks. if the rook is taken, then cxb3+ will result in an unstoppable passer.

31.Ke1 Rxc3 32.Rxc3 0-0

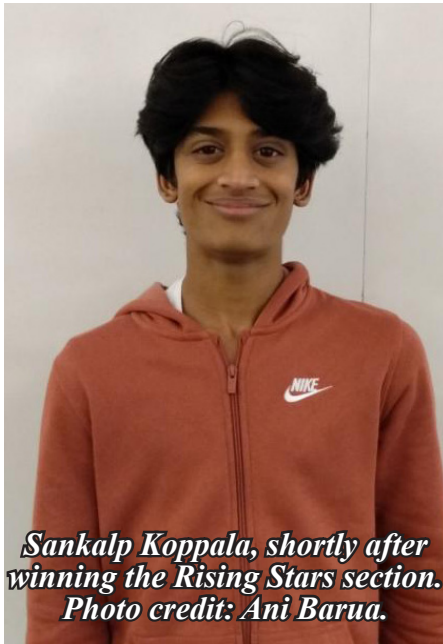
Here, 33.Ra3 Rd8 would actually still make me work for the win. However, my opponent had gotten low on time by this point and didn't want to grind out a long, likely losing endgame so he resigned. Maybe slightly premature, but overall, this was an extremely interesting fight which I feel was very well played by my opponent in a complex, unfamiliar position that ended up turning to my favor.

0-1

Rising Stars

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Sankalp Koppala, shortly after winning the Rising Stars section.
Photo credit: Ani Barua.

The brand-new Rising Stars section lived up to its name and attracted ten ambitious youngsters, all of whom are quickly rising through the chess ranks! Sankalp Koppala, a seventh grader from Skyridge Middle School in Camas, crushed the field with a resounding 7.5 points from nine games, allowing only three draws against Neevan Reddy Saddi, Nikhil Ramkumar, and Kate Wong. For his victory, Sankalp earns a seed into the 2024 Washington State Challengers. Bothell chess stud Nikhil Ramkumar finished in second place one and a half points back on six points. Two players shared third/fourth place honors with 5.5 points apiece: Sid Siddem of Redmond and Aarav Bharathy Mohan of Bothell. Devansh Sharma of Redmond and Dann Merriman of Duvall split the fifth-place prize, each with an even score of 4.5 points. Congratulations to the winners!

Nikhil Ramkumar (1525) – Sid Siddem (1500) [B23]

WA State, Rising Stars
Redmond, WA (R4), February 12, 2023
[Sid Siddem]

1.e4

My opponent was 1611 US Chess (Post Event, not published) and 1356 FIDE, the top seed in the rising stars section. I am happy I got a pretty nice upset in this game, but it was really difficult and chaotic, even though I had an advantage in this game.

1...e5 2.Nc3 d6 3.f4 Nf6

I think I should not have played ...Nf6, because theoretically, I am supposed to play ...Nc6 first and then play ...g6 in the closed Sicilian.

4.Nf3 g6 5.Bb5+ Bd7 6.Bxd7+ Qxd7 7.d3 Nc6 8.0-0 Bg7 9.Be3 0-0 10.Qe1?!

I do not think this was a good move because I think my opponent is making unnecessary queen moves for no reason, so I think this move was not really that good in my opinion.

10...e6 11.Qh4 b6

I spent a while thinking why my opponent played Qh4, and I came to the conclusion my opponent wanted to attack my kingside, or play something like e5, trying to attack my pawn structure, and capture the loose c5-pawn, so I played ...b6 to solidify my pawn chain.

12.g4!?

I spent a while thinking about this move and I thought that it was kind of scary for me in this position because my opponent was planning on doing a same-side pawn storm, and attack my king, so I decided that if my opponent was going to attack on the kingside, I will try and seek counterplay in the center/queenside,

starting with the pawn break ...d5.

12...d5 13.e5?

My opponent rushed this move pretty fast, and I think he missed the fact that I had ...Nxc2, winning a pawn due to a zwischenzug, since I can do ...Nxc2 first and then play ...d4

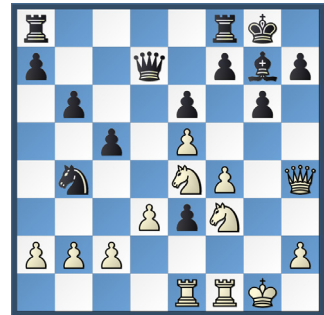
13...Nxc2 14.Qxc2 d4 15.Ne4?!

I think my opponent thought he was taking an outpost for his knight, but it does not really help him that much, because I have ...dxe3, having somewhat of a passed pawn I can use to my benefit, and I can help support it with ...Ne7-f5 ideas.

15...dxe3 16.Qh4 Ne7 17.Ng3

Now, I think my opponent realized the idea of me playing ...Nf5, and he did not want to give up that outpost very easily, but luckily I still had ...Nd5, still a good square for my knight, and defending the e3-pawn.

17...Nd5 18.Rae1 Nb4 19.Ne4??



Position after 19.Ne4

I was kind of worried when my opponent played this, because of Nf6 threats, attacking my kingside and trying to get rid of my good dark-squared bishop which was defending, but I had nothing to worry about since I could just play ...Nxc2, attacking the rook and guarding the e3-pawn at the same time, but I felt

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Email: SSeshadri@srichessacademy.com

scared, so I played ...Qd8, which was a blunder, because I thought I needed to defend.

19...Qd8??

Like I said for the last move, I could have simply played ...Nxc2, and playing ...Qd8 was not really necessary.

20.Nf6+ Bxf6 21.exf6 h5??

I still had ...Nxc2 in this position, but I was afraid of my opponent playing Qh6, Ng5 and such, but they do not work since if my opponent moves the queen off the h4-d8 diagonal. The f6-pawn is hanging, knight threats don't work since I have ...Qg7 to defend, and in the game I thought this was the one good defensive move.

22.Rxe3 Nxc2 23.Re5 Qxd3 24.Qg5??

I think my opponent missed ...Ne3 in this position, and playing Qg5 was not a good move because if he actually was trying to threaten Qh6, I think I can just play ...Qf5.

24...Kh7??

I was afraid in this position and did not calculate thoroughly that I could just use the knight to defend, but I thought I had to play ...Kh7 to defend, but I just waste a tempo and move my king for no reason.

25.Qh4??

I think this was an unnecessary queen move, because maybe if my opponent was threatening Ng5+, there is no point, and now I can take advantage of my really good knight and play Ne3 or so.

25...Ne3 26.Re1 Ng4??

I had the right idea in this position, but I should have played ...Nf5 not ...Ng4 because I thought the rook sacrifice on h5 does not work since I can defend with Qg6, but my opponent was not really necessarily required to trade queens, so I lost my advantage here.

27.Rhx5+ gxh5 28.Qxh5+ Nh6??

I should have played Kg8 instead because I was kind of afraid of giving my knight away easily, but I still lose it anyway, and I thought after Ng5, Kg8, Qxh6, I have Qg6, and we trade queens, it does not work that easily, because my opponent would not want to exchange off that easily with an attack like this, so now my opponent has a pretty good advantage.

29.Ng5+ Kg8 30.Qxh6 Qg6 31.Qxg6+??

I think in the game, my opponent thought this was a lost position because he was

down the exchange, but he should have played Qh4, not trading off queens that easily, and now after he traded, the computer thinks this is an even position, but I think I have a slight advantage since I am up the exchange, and I have fighting chances.

31...fxg6 32.Rxe6 Rad8 33.Re7??

The position was equal until this move, according to the computer because my opponent is giving up his f6-pawn very easily, which is bad because it is key for restricting my king in the back, and now I am winning since after ...Rxf6, Rxa7, I have ...Rd1+, ...Rd2+, and I win the queenside pawns.

33...Rxf6 34.Ne6 Rd1+ 35.Kg2 Re1

I wanted to try and eliminate the knight or the rook and simplify the position first before I capture my opponent's queenside

pawns, so I put pressure on the pinned knight.

36.Re8+ Kf7 37.Rf8+

I was considering in this position immediately taking the knight on e6, but luckily, I realized it was a bad move because of ...Re8, skewering the king and rook, equalizing the position, so I decided to try and force a rook trade and simplify the position.

37...Ke7 38.Rxf6 Kxf6 39.Nc7 Re2+

My opponent resigned, because he is down the exchange, and I win the queenside pawns. This game was very complex and chaotic and had winning chances for both sides. I was down like an hour in time, because I put in a lot of time in the beginning, but the extra hour of calculation paid off in this game.

0-1



Washington State Rising Stars

Pairing#	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals...	Tie-break (S-B)	Place	Prize	Seeded into...
1	Neevan Reddy Saddi	1496	👑	1	0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	3	1.5	=8th/9th		
2	Nikhil Ramkumar	1525	👑	👑	0	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	1	6	24.5	2nd	\$125.00	
3	Sid Siddem	1500	1	1	👑	0.5	1	0.5	0	0	0.5	1	5.5	20	=3rd/4th	\$62.50	
4	Kate Wong	1450	1	0	0.5	👑	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	4	15.25	7th		
5	Sambhav Koppala	1379	0.5	0	0	0	0	👑	0	0	0	1	1.5	4.5	10th		
6	Devansh Sharma	1462	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	👑	0	0	0	1	4.5	15.75	=5th/6th	\$12.50	
7	Aarav Bharathy Mohan	1432	1	0	1	0.5	1	1	👑	0	0.5	0.5	5.5	20.25	=3rd/4th	\$62.50	
8	Sankalp Koppala	1439	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	1	1	1	👑	1	1	7.5	31	1st	\$225.00	2024 WA State Challengers
9	Dann Merriman	1534	0.5	0	0.5	1	1	1	0.5	0	👑	0	4.5	17	=5th/6th	\$12.50	
10	Deeksha Shankaranand	1264	1	0	0	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	1	👑	3	12.25	=8th/9th		



WASHINGTON OPEN

Sat-Mon, May 27-29, 2023

Redmond Marriott
7401 164th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052

**\$12,000 Prize Fund
(based on 170 paid entries)**

Main Event:

Format: A 6-round Swiss event across 3 sections: Open, Premier (U1800), Rising (U1400).

Entry Fee: \$130 by Sun, 04/30; \$140 by Sun, 05/14; and \$150 after 05/14 or on-site. Less \$50 for Seniors (age 50+). Playing up one section is allowed (for \$80 extra) if rating is within 200 points of the section's lower limit (i.e., min 1600 for Open, min 1200 for Premier). Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs, and US Chess 2400+. Re-entry for ½ of original EF. Canadians may pay CAD\$ at par.

Rating: Dual rated (US Chess & NWSRS), plus Open section will be FIDE rated (except G/60 games). Highest of May 2023 US Chess, May 2023 FIDE, and current NWSRS ratings used to determine sections, pairings, and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating.

Prizes:

- **Open:** \$1000, \$800, \$600, \$500, \$400;
U2100: \$200, \$150; U1900: \$200, \$150
- **Premier (U1800):** \$600, \$500, \$400, \$350, \$300;
U1650: \$200, \$150; U1500: \$200, \$150
- **Rising (U1400):** \$500, \$400, \$350, \$300, \$250;
U1200: \$200, \$150; U1000: \$200, \$150; Unr.: \$200, \$150

Championship Seeds: Highest finishing Washington resident in the Open and Premier section is seeded into the 2024 Washington State Championship, in the Championship and Invitational sections, respectively. Ties for a seed will be resolved by post-event playoff games.

Mixed Doubles Prizes: Best male-female 2-player team's combined score: \$300, \$200, \$100. Average team rating must be under 2000; may play in different sections. Register (no extra fee) before round 2. Players may win a Mixed Doubles prize in addition to other prizes.

Special Prizes (per section) – in addition to other prizes:

- **Highest (USCF) Rating Gain:** \$100, \$50.
- **Biggest Upset Win:** \$100, \$50.
- **Fair-Play, Kindness, Spreading Joy:** \$50. Please share your nominations.
- **Best Dressed (per day):** \$25. May not win repeatedly.
- **Best Annotated Game:** \$100, \$50, \$25. Submit one annotated game that you consider to be interesting or well-played. A panel of judges will select winners.

Hotel Info:

Redmond Marriott, \$125 per night. One King or two Queen beds, single or double occupancy. Call (800) 228-9290 to request the Washington Chess Federation block, or use the [online reservation](#). Group code: WCFWCFR. Cut-off date for discounts: Fri, May 05, 2023.

Schedule:

- **3-day option:** Sat @ 10 AM, 5:30 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 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. The schedule permits doing this with minimum or no half-point byes!

Time Controls:

- **3-day:** 40/120, SD/30; +10. Late default: 60 min.
- **2-day:** G/60; +10 (rds 1-3), rds 4-6 same as for 3-day.

Registration, Information & Payment:

- **Before event:** Online (by Thu, 05/25 @ 5 PM) at NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/ (pay by credit / debit / PayPal) or make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation. Mail to: Josh Sinanan, 4174 NE 148th Ave NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond, WA 98052.
Info: washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com, 206-769-3757
- **On-site:** Sat, 05/27 @ 8-9 AM for 3-day schedule, or 4:30-5 PM if entering with 1 half-point bye. Sun, 05/28 @ 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 first round. 2 half-point byes available; request before end of round 2. Play on any two days, if taking 2 half-point byes.

Miscellaneous:

Current US Chess and WCF/OCF/ICA memberships required; may be paid at registration. Other states accepted.

All equipment is provided; please bring a digital clock, if available.

Procedure and Health/Safety Policy:

Pairings and standings will be posted before each round in the hallway near the play area. Face masks optional for players and spectators. If interested, please bring your own mask.

WASHINGTON OPEN, May 27-29 (cont.)

Fun Side Events!

(many run between rounds of the Main Event)

Washington Open Scholastic

Sat, 05/27 @ 9 AM – 4 PM (during round 1)

Format: Dual sections – Open and Reserve:

- Open section: A 4-round G/40; +5 Swiss in one section: **K-12 Open**. For intermediate to advanced players. Dual Northwest and US Chess rated. US Chess membership required. Clocks and notation required. Rounds: 9 AM, 10:45 AM, lunch, 12:45 PM, 2:30 PM. Awards presentation: ~4 PM.

- Reserve sections: A 5-round G/30 Swiss in two sections: **K-4 U1200** and **5-12 U1200**. For novice to intermediate players. Northwest rated only. US Chess membership not required. No clocks used from the start, but a 10-minute clock will be placed into games still unfinished after 40 minutes. Rounds: 9 AM, 10:15, lunch, 12 PM, 1:15 PM, 2:30 PM. Awards presentation: ~4 PM.

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

Entry fee: \$45 if registered by Sat, 05/20, or \$55 after. Room for 125 players – please register early.

Awards:

- Section prizes: Amazon Gift Cards in each section: 1st \$100, 2nd \$75, 3rd \$50, 4th \$25.
- Special prizes (per section): Medals for first-timers and biggest upset win.
- Top two players (by TPR) in the K-12 Open section win free entry into the 2-day section of the 2023 Washington Open (Main Event).

Rating: Higher of May 2023 US Chess or current NWSRS ratings used to determine sections and pairings.

Registration: 100% pre-registered (NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/ - pay by credit / debit / PayPal), no on-site entries or payments. Registration & payment deadline: Wed, 05/24 @ 5 PM. Unpaid players will be withdrawn from the event.

Health & Safety: Face masks optional for players and spectators. If interested, please bring your own mask.

Washington Open Carol Kleist Memorial Adult Swiss

Sat-Mon, 05/27-29 @ 11 AM & 4 PM (during all rds)

Sponsored by *Seattle Chess Club* with generous support from Henry Yan. Format: A 6-round Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. US Chess only rated. TC: G/90; +30. EF: \$60 online (by Fri, 05/26 @ 5 PM) or \$70 on-site; EF waived for unrated players who purchase memberships. Registration: Sat, 05/27 @ 10-10:30 AM (unless entering with half-point byes). Current US Chess membership and WCF/OCF/ICA membership required. May 2023 US Chess rating used to determine pairings and prizes. Guaranteed prize fund: \$1,000. 1st \$240, 2nd \$180, 3rd \$150, 1st U2000 \$110, 1st U1700 \$100, 1st U1400 \$90, 1st U1100/Unrated \$80, Biggest upset win: \$50.

Washington Open Chess960 (Fischer Random) Championship

Sat, 05/27 @ 2:15 PM – 4:30 PM (b/w rounds 1 & 2)

Format: A 4-Round Swiss in one section, 1 half-point bye available. Unrated. TC: G/10; +3. EF: \$20. Registration: 1:30-2 PM. Rounds at 2:15 PM, 2:50, 3:25, and 4:00 PM. No memberships required. Higher of May 2023 US Chess and current NWSRS ratings used to determine pairings and prizes. A new (randomized) opening position for each round. Players will have 2 minutes before clocks start to examine the opening position. Prize fund: \$100/b10. 1st \$40, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20, 1st U1400/Unrated \$10.

Washington Open Puzzle Solving Competition

Sat, 05/27 @ 4:30 PM – 5:15 PM (b/w rounds 1 & 2)

Format: Solve 15 chess puzzles in 45 minutes. Write solutions on paper. Evaluation based on accuracy and completeness. EF: \$15. Registration: 3:30-4:15 PM. No memberships required. Prize fund: \$150/b20. 1st \$50, 2nd \$35, 3rd \$20, 1st U1700 \$15, 1st U1400 \$15, 1st Unrated \$15.

Washington Open Annual Chess Workshop for Girls & Women

Sat, 05/27 @ 6 PM – 8 PM (during round 2)

Format: Workshop led by WFM Chouchan Airapetian (chornyaa@msn.com, 206-914-4252), experienced chess coach, organizer, and promoter, former US Women's Championship contender, WCF Girls' and Women's Chess Director. Registration: 5:45-6 PM. Entry fee: Free! Schedule: 6-7 PM: "How to develop & cultivate girls' and women's chess." 7-8 PM: Q&A, complementary pizza & refreshments, and ladies' bughouse.

Washington Open Rapid Championship

Sun, 05/28 @ 2 PM – 5:40 PM (b/w rounds 3 & 4)

Format: A 5-Round Swiss in one section, 2 half-point byes available. US Chess Quick rated. TC: G/15; +5. EF: \$25 online (by Sat, 05/27 @ 5 PM) or \$30 on-site. Registration: 1-1:45 PM. Rounds at 2 PM, 2:45, 3:30, 4:15, and 5 PM. Current US Chess membership and WCF/OCF/ICA membership required. Higher of May 2023 US Chess Quick and current NWSRS ratings used to determine pairings and prizes. Prize fund: \$400/b25. 1st \$100, 2nd \$80, 3rd \$60, 1st U1900 \$40, 1st U1600 \$35, 1st U1300 \$30, 1st Unrated \$25, Biggest upset win: \$30.

Washington Open Ignacio Perez Memorial Blitz

Mon, 05/29 @ 8 PM – 10:15 PM (after round 6)

Format: A 9-Round Swiss in one section, 3 half-point byes available. US Chess Blitz rated. TC: G/4; +2. EF: \$25 online (by Sun, 05/28 @ 5 PM) or \$30 on-site. Registration: 7-7:45 PM. Rounds at 8 PM, 8:15, 8:30, 8:45, 9, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, and 10 PM. Current US Chess membership and WCF/OCF/ICA membership required. Higher of May 2023 US Chess Blitz and current NWSRS ratings used to determine pairings and prizes. Prize fund: \$750/b25. 1st \$200, 2nd \$150, 3rd \$100, 1st U1900 \$80, 1st U1700 \$70, 1st U1500 \$60, 1st U1300/Unrated \$50, Biggest upset win: \$40.

Collyer Finale

Kevin Korsmo

Michael Cambareri emerged as the sole winner from a record-sized field of 112 players at the 30th, and final, Dave Collyer Memorial tournament in Spokane February 25-26, 2023. His 5.0 score finished half-a-point ahead of a trio who shared second place: Geoff Gale, Brian Lee, and Cam Leslie.

By the start of round one, 117 players were registered for the event, shattering the previous mark of 76 participants and overfilling the playing hall's 107-person occupancy limit. Fortunately, five players did not appear and several byes each round left us within legal limits! There were 23 first time US Chess players, with the newcomers coming from Boise, Bozeman, Yakima, and all sorts of places in between. The result was a top-heavy and a bottom-heavy pairing chart. Accelerated pairings were needed for the first two rounds, resulting in some particularly odd pairings in round two. Still, the upsets that have traditionally marked this event kept up at something akin to their normal pace, with the two largest accomplished in the first and second rounds, respectively. The five player Expert class had a tough opening round, scoring only 2.5. The three masters would run into problems beginning two rounds later.

The second round saw the top boards largely winning every game, but the same could not be said of Saturday night's third round. Second seed Curt Collyer took his traditional evening bye, but IM John Donaldson and NM Nat Koons ran in to stubborn competition from some Class A players. Steve Merwin had once again prepared a line to play against Donaldson (his efforts last year produced a very entertaining puzzle that the IM managed to solve and turn against him). This year the home-cooking led to a draw. Koons, in turn, ran into Josh Price, a young Idahoan making his first Collyer appearance. Price secured a victory to join a crowd

of nine undefeated players heading into the second day. Seven others were a half point off the pace.

Veteran Chris Kalina, once of Seattle and currently from the Minneapolis area, climbed to board one for round four and faced off with Cam Leslie in a game that battled late into the round before Leslie pulled out a win in a difficult position. Michael Cambareri and Antonius Raelund both secured victories that set them up for a board one encounter in the final round. Geoff Gale, another veteran returning to Collyer action after a lengthy lay-off, battled one of last year's sensations, Brian Lee, to a hard-fought draw. That left three undefeated and a half dozen others sitting at 3.5 for the final round. Leslie faced off with IM Donaldson on board two.

Spokane woke to snowfall Sunday morning, and reports of bad weather in western Washington and the passes encouraged several players to withdraw to tackle the mountains in daylight. The forecast also forced one of the local players, a snowplow driver for the City of Spokane, to withdraw when he was called in to work! It was only the third time that Spokane actually saw snow during the Collyer, although winter weather in the passes has had impact on many more occasions.

The board one game was largely anticlimactic, as Michael secured an advantage fairly early and pulled in the full point. The board two encounter went longer before Leslie's passed pawn forced a drawn game. That left Cambareri, one of seven former Collyer winners in the field, alone on top. The 5.0 score also resulted in a \$300 donated perfect score prize added to the first-place award.

There were 28 other prize winners, a surprising number to those of us who were among the 31 participants of the first Collyer. How things had grown!

Geoff Gale, Cam Leslie, and Brian Lee scored 4.5 to take the second and

third place prizes, along with the Expert prize. The class A prizes were split among Ryan Ackerman, Steve Merwin, Josh Price, and Antonius Raelund. The class B prizes were even shared by David Enevoldsen, Griffin Herr, Francisco Lopez, and Andrew Rankin. The class C first prize went to Ben Curtis (4.0), with Nick Hunt taking second with 3.5. Third place in the class was split by Finnegan Flavin, David Peoples, John Stookesbury, Walter van Heemstede Obelt, and Loyd Willaford. The class D first prize was won by Patrick Perry (3.0), with Devin Wolford (2.5) claiming second place. Third place was shared by Grace Deng, Patrick Kirlin, and Rory Peterson. Class E was shared by Eshan Reddy and Lane Wicks (3.5), with a 3.0 score giving the third-place prize to Parker Vladimirof. The Jim Waugh biggest upset prizes were won by Chris Bruceri (795 points), Devin Flavin (705), and Lane Wicks (440).

As always, the event was sponsored by the Spokane Chess Club and the Gary Younker Foundation in memory of Dave and Ellen Collyer and Gary Younker. The weekend began with a Friday afternoon blitz tournament that drew 18 players and needed to be set in two sections. The blitz tourney was followed by the annual John Donaldson lecture that concluded with analysis of a Dave Collyer game from 50 years earlier. The IM then took on 20 players in a simul. He won 17 games, drew two and lost one.

The 112 participants marked the largest non-scholastic event in Spokane chess history, outdrawing the 103 who played here in the 2009 Washington Open.

Mark your calendars for the weekend of February 24-25, 2024, to greet our new tournament! Plans are slowly developing, and we anticipate that details will be announced in the Fall, but we are interested in starting a new tradition on the final weekend of February. Stay tuned.

Games

An understanding of Donaldson-Merwin from the 2023 Collyer cannot occur without first examining Donaldson-Merwin from the previous year. After the third round of the 2022 Collyer, I knew I would have Black the next morning against John. And knowing how the opening would go, my good friend Mika Mitchell and I spent half the night preparing a somewhat dubious line for Black hoping to cause John to spend some time working it all out. And the plan succeeded.

**John Donaldson –
Steve Merwin [D02]**
Collyer Memorial Spokane, WA
(R4), February 27, 2022
[Steve Merwin]

**1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nc6 3.g3 Bg4 4.Bg2 Qd7
5.0-0 0-0-0 6.c4**

6.c3 is also played here, but c4 is the most testing move.

6...dxc4 7.Nbd2 Nxd4?!

Black really should play 7...f6 here with the idea of 8.Nxc4 e5, which fights for the center and gives him a chance to develop. However, the line we prepared abandoned that notion with the idea of grabbing as many pawns as possible.

**8.Nxd4 Qxd4 9.Qa4 Bxe2?! 10.Re1 Bd3
11.Nf3 Qb6 12.Be3 Qa6 13.Qxa6 bxa6**

The last four moves for both sides have been essentially forced. Now Black is a full three pawns ahead! However, he is way behind in development, his king is unsafe, and his queenside pawns are a mess. As we will see, I am prepared to sacrifice the exchange in return for development, all still part of the previous night's preparation.

14.Ne5 Nh6



Position after 14...Nh6

It was here that John spent a full 45

minutes considering his move!! After the game he said this was a personal record. He was weighing the line 15.Bxh6 gxh6 16.Nxf7 Bg7 17.Bh3+ Kb7, now with the chance to even the material count but allowing Black to develop and target White's b-pawn, against other options. And the option he finally chose was the correct one, not surprising for a player of his caliber.

15.b3!!

This is the number one move by Stockfish if it's allowed to crank long enough, and one I hadn't looked at. Now Black's king is even more endangered, and I was unable to work myself out of it despite being an hour ahead on time, even eventually losing on time (although I had a lost position anyway). Which brings us forward one year later.

**John Donaldson –
Steve Merwin [D02]**
Collyer Memorial Spokane, WA
(R3), February 25, 2023
[Steve Merwin]

**1.Nf3 Nc6 2.d4 d5 3.g3 Bg4 4.Bg2 Qd7
5.0-0 0-0-0 6.c4 dxc4 7.Nbd2 f6**

The principled move as mentioned above. Now if 8.Nxc4 e5 and a fight ensues. But John had other ideas.

8.Qc2 Bh3

I was prepared for John's eighth move so my response was immediate. But I did not expect his response, which was also immediate as was his tenth move.

9.Bxh3! Qxh3 10.b4!?

When Mika and I were preparing for this game, we abandoned the notion of analyzing 9.Bxh3 as I assumed John would be unfamiliar with this line, and knowing his style of play we figured he would opt for continued development, for example 9.Ne4 Bxg2 10.Kxg2 e6 11.Qxc4. But the IM had out prepared us, no surprise there!

10...Nh6?

I thought for maybe ten minutes before making this move and decided it, and my subsequent move, were necessary in order to provide any chances. But in reality, 10...c3! is called for and then, as John pointed out after the game, 11.Qxc3 e5 12.dxe5 Bxb4 and Black is still fighting. As it turns out, my move is bad but looks scary enough that it requires careful calculation by White. So, like the

previous year, I went ahead on time.

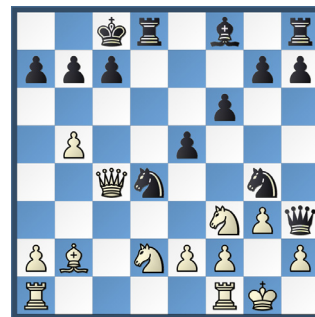
11.Qxc4 Ng4 12.Bb2!

Played after much thought.

12...e5

And here again, John spent considerable time. Of course, not 13.dxe5?? Rxd2!

13.b5 Nxd4



Position after 13...Nxd4

And here I offered John a draw. I didn't think it was an unreasonable offer, as Black is now a pawn ahead and if 14.Bxd4 Rxd4 15.Qe6+ Rd7 and White has no winning chances as Black is threatening Nxf2! After some more thought John accepted the draw, likely in view of his clock situation and not seeing a clear way for White to gain an advantage.

As it turned out, White could have played 14.Rfc1! (threatening mate in one) followed by ...Nxf3+ 15.Nxf3 Rd7 (...Bd6, my original plan, would have lost to 16.Ba3) and it appears that Black is holding things together while still menacing White's king.

However, the idea John and I both missed was 16.Qa4! and Black is busted, as ...Kb8 runs into 17.b6! Ultimately, this draw, combined with the large number of players with 3-0 scores, set the stage for someone other than John Donaldson to win the Dave Collyer Memorial, a rare occurrence indeed!

½-½

**Ryan Ackerman (1979) –
Ben Patterson (1701) [D15]**
Collyer Memorial Spokane, WA (R5),
February 26, 2023
[Ryan Ackerman]

Few players beat experts within their first five tournaments. But Ben had beaten me twice already and took down another expert in a previous round. He shows a great deal of natural talent for the game

and is clearly hitting the ground running. But I wasn't about to let him beat me a third time.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Bg4?!

It's improper to move the c8 bishop so early. Similarly, Bf5 is also dubious. 4...Bf5?! 5.Qb3 Qb6 6.c5! Qxb3 7.axb3 Nbd7 8.b4 e6 9.b5 Be7 10.e3±

5.Ne5 Bf5?

5...Be8! 6.cxd5±; 5...Bh5? 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.g4! Bg6 8.h4!+-



Position after 5...Bf5

6.Qb3?

Due to the seemingly insignificant prevalence of the knight on e5, 6.Qb3 and my following move now result in only equality. Yup. This whole plan is a total dud. If the remainder of the game were dry and boring, I would expand upon this claim but there's no shortage of interesting moments in this game. 6.cxd5! cxd5 (if: 6...Nxd5!? 7.e4! Nxc3 8.bxc3+-) 7.e4! (Not all that looks complicated is truly more complicated. Resisting the pretty pawn sac in favor of a more conservative plan leads to a much less convincing outcome. 7.Qb3!? Nc6! 8.Qxb7!? Nxe5 9.dxe5 Rb8 10.Qxa7 d4 11.Qa4+ Qd7 12.exf6 dxc3 13.Qxd7+ Bxd7 14.bxc3!±) 7...dxe4 8.Qb3 e6 9.Qxb7 Nbd7 10.Nc6! Qc8 11.Ba6!+-

6...Qb6 7.c5?

7.Qxb6!±

7...Qxb3 8.axb3= Bc2?

8...Nbd7 9.Nxd7?! Nxd7 10.Bf4?? e5+-

9.b4± Nbd7 10.Bf4 Nxe5 11.Bxe5 Nd7 12.Bg3!± e5 13.e3!

13.dxe5? d4 14.Na4? b5 15.Nb6? Nxb6 16.cxb6? Bxb4#

13...f6?

13...g5! Are you feeling dizzy yet? 14.h4!± exd4! 15.exd4 gxh4 16.Rxh4 Be7 17.Kd2 Bxh4 18.Bxh4 Bf5 19.b5 Rg8 20.f3± How about now? Not yet?

Wow. I'm impressed.

14.Be2+- h5 15.h4 g6 16.0-0 Bg7 17.Rfc1 Bf5 18.b5+- exd4 19.exd4 Bh6

At this point Ben and I both had exactly 42 minutes remaining. 2.5 hours had passed since the beginning of the game. I now spent nine minutes assessing the merit of inviting the bishops to c2 and d2. My intuition served me, but my calculation did not.

20.Rd1 Bc2 21.Re1 Bd2?

This move allows for a simple tactic, but positionally Black is lost nonetheless. The trick for White is to understand the power of Ba6. It's such a strong move that moving it to f3 (which I played later) is an outright blunder. I'll demonstrate: 21...0-0 22.bxc6! bxc6 23.Ba6!+- the c-pawn is indefensible. The previously innocuous looking g3-bishop fiendishly grins at Black's rooks who would love nothing more than to save the c-pawn and drum up counterplay against White's b-pawn. The g3-bishop is a monster. Think of the scholastic-like tactic with a king on c8, rook on d8, and how White can sac their queen on a6 to score checkmate. That's what's happening. But instead of a king on c8, it's the pawn on c6. I wish I had thought of it that way during the game.

22.Rf1?

4.70/34

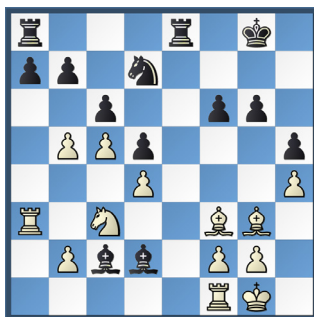
22.Bd3+ I missed a three-move tactic. With over 30 minutes on my clock. 22...Bxe1 23.Rxe1+ Kf7 24.Bxc2

22...0-0 23.Ra3?±

Instead of the Ba6 idea, I chose the plan of doubling along the a-file. I chose incorrectly.

23.bxc6! bxc6 24.Ba6!+-

23...Rfe8 24.Bf3??



Position after 24.Bf3

This blunder was not my fault. The bishop is an avid bowler and wanted to be lined

up against four targets at once. He was very persuasive about it.

24...Bxc3 25.bxc6 bxc6 26.bxc3

I spend 14 of my remaining 28 minutes on this move and conducted a poker bluff strategy.

26...Bd3 27.Rc1

This was a semi-bluff. I didn't know if I could actually pull off c4 and Rxc4 but I figured if I looked confident as I played this move, he'd buy it. I am the Spokane City Champion after all.

27...Bc4?

It worked! Now Rb1 becomes available!! 27...Bb5! 28.Bd6 (28.c4?! dxc4 (28...Bxc4?? It was not a total bluff. In truth it was possible to sac the exchange in this scenario. 29.Rxc4! dxc4 30.Bxc6+-) 29.d5 Ne5 30.dxc6 Nxf3+? 31.Rxf3 Rac8 32.c7±) 28...a6! 29.Raa1±

28.Rb1!+- a6 29.Rb7! Nf8 30.Ra4!? Bb5 31.Rb4!±

It was better to leave the rook exerting pressure down the a-file. 31.Ra1! 1.42/34 Rad8 32.Kh2 Rd7 33.Rb6! Ne6 34.Bd1! Kg7 35.Ba4 Rc8! 36.Bxb5 axb5 37.Raa6 Nd8 38.Bf4± Ne6 39.Kg3 Kf7 40.Kf3 g5 41.hxg5 fxg5 42.Be5 Nd8 43.Ke3 Re7 44.Kd3±

31...Re1+?

It's a very challenging situation for Black. But there was a very interesting method of holding the fort via pestering the b7 rook, repositioning the knight, sac'ing a pawn and activating both rooks. It's pretty amazing: 31...Ne6! 32.Bd6 (32.R4xb5?? axb5-+) 32...Nd8! 33.Rc7 Ne6 34.Rd7 Ng7! 35.Be7 Nf5! 36.Bxf6 Re1+ 37.Kh2 Rf8 38.Bg5 Rf7! 39.Rd8+ Rf8 40.Rxf8+±

32.Kh2 a5?

Ben told me after the game he was 'seeing double' around this point. He had 12 minutes and I had five. Our game was the last still in progress. Several spectators had gathered.

32...Rc8 33.Bd6! Rce8 34.R4xb5! axb5 35.Rc7! Ne6 36.Rxc6 b4 37.cxb4 Nxd4 38.Bxd5+ Kh8 39.Rb6!+-

33.R4xb5!

White cannot win with making a sacrifice: 33.Rb2?? Bc4 34.Rb8±; 33.Bxd5+!? cxd5 34.R4xb5+-

33...a4!±

33...cxb5 34.Bxd5+ Kh8 35.Rxb5 Rc8

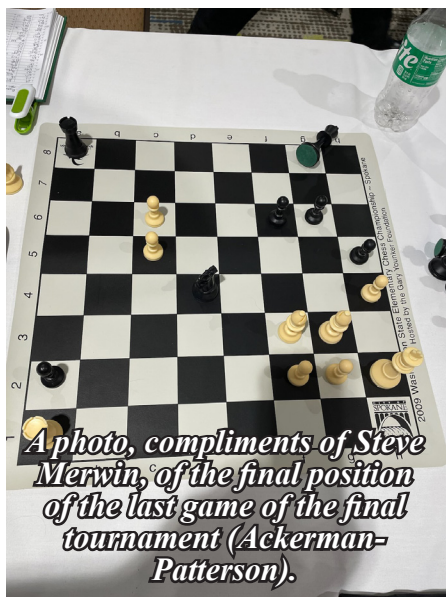
(35...Ra7 36.c6+-) 36.Rxa5 g5 37.f3
 Ree8 38.Bb7 gxf4 39.Bxf4 Kg7 40.Bxc8
 Rxc8 41.d5 Kg6 42.c6 Ne6 43.c4 Nf4
 44.Bg3 Ne6 45.Bd6 Ng5 46.Bf4 Ne6
 47.Be3 Nd8 48.Rc5 Kf5 49.c7

34.Rb1 Rxb1 35.Rxb1 a3 36.c4

I now had three minutes, and Ben had 11. After I played c4, he thought for five minutes before proceeding.

36...a2 37.Ra1 Ne6 38.cxd5 Nxd4 39.dxc6

1-0



A photo, compliments of Steve Merwin, of the final position of the last game of the final tournament (Ackerman-Patterson).

Collyer Memories

By Kevin Korsmo

Thirty years. 3,808 games played. 1,695 participants. Nine perfect scores. Numerous magical moments. Friendships extending decades. At least 1500 dozen cookies. An uncountable number of lessons learned. An even greater appreciation for chess players as a unique species of humans. The Collyer Memorial tournament has been a big part of my life these past three decades, and even before the final game (Ryan Ackerman v. Ben Patterson) was finished, I was dwelling in memories.

After the death of Dave Collyer in 1992 from lupus, Gary Younker inherited

the mantle of Spokane Chess Club president. He hoped to have a strong annual tournament, modeled on Yakima's Harvest Open, in honor of his friend. The two had met and shared early chess experiences in Wenatchee and Ellensburg before both men turned up in Spokane. In conjunction with Professor Rod Stackelberg, they led the club during the 1980s.

The first Collyer was played May 15-16, 1993, in a conference room on the second floor of Gonzaga's Crosby Library before its remodeling into the current Crosby Center. 31 players turned out; 7 of them took part in the final event 30 years later: Steve Fabian (1993 runner-up), David Rowles, Robert O'Bannan, Kevin Korsmo, Dawn Fields, Loyd Willaford, and David Griffin. The ornate conference table that dominated the room proved too wide in the center for play! Still, space was found for everyone, and a new tradition was born.

Year two in 1994 saw the move to the last weekend in February and was the first of many events played in Ad-101 on the Gonzaga campus, the club's longtime weeknight playing site. Roy Dahmen, a long-time club presence, provided several large photographs from that year that were displayed in subsequent Collyer tourneys. The second event saw the first influx of Montana players who eventually would become the second largest contingent at future Collyer tourneys.

Gary had led groups of Spokane "ratings raiders" to Missoula tournaments, sometimes constituting the majority of the players in some smaller events, throughout the 1990s. The Montanans returned the favor. In particular, Professor Bill McBroom, Romie Carpenter, Dan McCourt, and Sherwood Moore could be counted on to attend Collyer tournaments more regularly than many Spokane club members!

The John Donaldson years began with the Y2K Collyer in 2000. Dave Collyer was one of the first people John met during his first visits to the Tacoma Chess Club in the 1970s. John

credited Dave for opening his eyes to the larger chess world that would become a huge part of John's life. The Donaldson era saw the event expand to include a popular Friday lecture and simul. Attendance began to increase, growing year after year. John would appear at every Collyer this century, although one time he had to return to Oakland after his lecture to deal with a serious illness in the family and was unable to play in the tournament.

Gary died of cancer in the spring of 2002, entrusting me with his special tournament before he passed. In the aftermath, Steve Merwin spearheaded the creation of the Gary Younker Foundation to foster chess, especially youth chess, in Eastern Washington. The foundation, which is now in the process of closing, financially supported four state elementary championships, backed the Collyer Memorial tournament, and supplied chess gear to numerous schools during its 20-year run. Many a Collyer prize was donated to the foundation to support future endeavors.



David Collyer Memorial Open plaque. Photo credit: James Stripes.

In 2004, IM Eric Tangborn was recruited by Donaldson to join in the simul at Auntie's Bookstore and play in the tourney. The two IMs tag-teamed the field, coming along one after the other and putting constant time pressure on the contestants! The 2004 event was played in a new dinner theatre in downtown Spokane. Apparently, the cast was not advised that a chess tournament was going on downstairs, as they invaded during the third round between acts of the performance. The lighting proved to be a challenge as well, leading to a trip to the hardware store to purchase some portable work lights! Alas, the theatre did not remain in business, and we continued to explore new venues while Gonzaga remodeling projects kept taking our preferred campus locations away (who wants to turn a perfectly good chess site into a medical school?). The tournament had a lengthy run in the basement of St. Anne's Children's Center, a peaceful weekend location that Ted Baker secured for us. Remodeling and lease agreements eventually required that we relocate. The Millwood Presbyterian community hall (gymnasium with attached kitchen) was used until the pandemic closed everything down. The final two Collyer tournaments were played at hotels.

While every tournament presented strong chess, and the occasional unexpected challenge for the TD, it was the people that made the Collyer a memorable event. Gary Younker frequently commented on some of the colorful characters who attended chess events, likening them to the brighter colors among the hues that made up the "rainbow" of Spokane chess players. Every chess organizer has stories about some of the interesting personalities to venture into events. However, it is dedicated club players who assisted without being asked and the sportsmen who would venture hundreds of miles to play that stick out among my Collyer memories.

Jim Waugh played in the first 24 Collyer Memorials until advancing age led to his retirement from the chessboard. "Mr. Coffee" stored the club's equipment in the trunk of his car for years, bringing the sets to club every week along with a coffee pot to share his favorite beverage. He continued that tradition by providing coffee for the Collyer tourney throughout its initial years at Gonzaga locations. Jim began playing in Spokane chess events

just after World War II, and although just a class C player in his prime, he was dangerous, particularly in the first round of a tournament. He claimed many a largest upset prize, leading me to rename the upset prizes in his honor.

Dave Griffin, once a student of Dave Collyer's, is the only player to have his name in each of the 30 Collyer cross tables, although health problems sometimes reduced him to being a house player for the event. Missoula's UCCC (University and Community Chess Club), in conjunction with other Montana players, presented a plaque in 2010 listing all of the event winners and providing space to do so through 2029. The plaque, after its display at the tournament and annual update, was kept by Ellen Collyer. Ellen was a quiet angel in the background, always volunteering to help at the tournament—running to the bank with a deposit (back when banks still were open on Saturdays), going to the store for coffee and napkins, bringing lunch to the TD, and donating to the prize fund. She opened her house to visiting chess players and drove players to and from the airport. Her death in December 2021 was a huge blow.

The Montana connection provided strong support for the tourney from its early days. Bill McBroom was always the first entry to the tournament, with Romie Carpenter right behind him. The two also were early supporters of the Younker Foundation. Dan McCourt was equally dedicated. One year he attended the Donaldson lecture, drove back to Missoula to meet his son at the airport upon his return from overseas military service, and then returned the next morning in a snowstorm to play. Despite a heart problem that led him to withdraw from this year's event, Dan stepped up to drive a friend over when illness took out one of the Montana carpools. The drive turned out to be too much and Dan called in Saturday morning to withdraw a second time in order to return home, with his passenger driving for the return. Illness also forced Romie Carpenter, the winner of the third Collyer, to withdraw from the final event. Sherwood Moore, a frequent travel partner of Carpenter and McBroom, nonetheless ventured over on his own.

Steve Merwin long served as a financial backer and promoter of the Collyer tournaments despite living in Richland and now, Las Vegas. Jeremy

Younker, Gary's son, has played in one tournament a year since his father's death—the Collyer Memorial. Despite the limited play, he has raised his rating from 1590 to the mid-1800s. Dawn Fields and Dave Rowles, longtime Spokane CC supporters, also could be depended upon in times of need. Gary and Dave inspired great loyalty among their friends.

The named players are just some of the many who made the Collyer a special event and naming some names risks leaving out so many others deserving of a shout-out. So, all of you who have helped over the many years—pat yourselves on the back and know that I appreciate every one of you.

I also must acknowledge the role of my wife, Barbara, in keeping Gary's vision of a homestyle tournament alive. When I took over directing duties, she began baking cookies for the event. There were 100 dozen cookies baked for this year's tourney (I counted and trimmed off the excess) despite the fact that she was awaiting two knee replacement surgeries this year! She estimates that there were 60 to 80 dozen cookies baked each of the other 20 years. Her many cookie fans were always vocal in their praise and even resulted in a couple of write-ups in the Montana Chess Association newsletter. Now it is time to share the praise in *NWC*! Once, a longtime club player, unable to play in a Collyer due to a work conflict, still managed to turn up on Sunday with a couple of one-gallon bags to help reduce the surplus cookie population!

My big thrill of the final event was seeing many experienced players return to the game for one last Collyer tournament, even though their playing careers had been on hiatus, some for many years. Others had left the area but made the effort to return for the finale. They came from seven states and British Columbia; Minneapolis, Oakland, Billings, Boise, Las Vegas, and Seattle-Tacoma. It was a true celebration of friendship.

So, while there are a lot of chess memories, and untold stories, the last 30 years really have been about chess players. They are a different breed, although as diverse as any species on the planet. But so many of them are such good people that the tournament was never a chore, but a joy!

May our paths continue to cross in the years ahead. Thank you all for your contributions.

Seattle Chess Club Tournaments

→ Address ↖
 7212 Woodlawn Ave NE ↖
 Seattle WA 98115 ↖
 ↗ Info ↗
 www.seattlechess.club ↗
Addresses for Entries
 SCC Tnmt Dir
 2420 S 137 St
 Seattle WA 98168
 —or—
contact@seattlechess.club

May 6, June 3

Format: 3-RR, 4-plyr sec. by rtg. **TC:** G/100;+10. **EF:** \$9 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** Free quad entry. **Reg:** 9-9:45 a.m. **Rds:** 10:00-2:15-6:30. **Misc:** US Chess memb. req'd. NS, NC.

Saturday Quads

May 14

Format: 4-SS. **TC:** G/50;+10. **EF:** \$18 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** 1st 35%, 2nd 27%, Bottom Half 1st 22%, 2nd 16% (\$10 per EF to prize fund). **Reg:** 10:30-11:15 a.m. **Rds:** 11:30-1:50-4:10-6:30. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4—commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess memb. req'd. NS, NC.

Sunday Tornado

May 21

Format: 5-RR in 6- or 5-player sections. **TC:** G/20;+8. **EF:** \$12 (+\$6 fee for non-SCC). **Prize Fund:** \$\$54 b/6. **Prizes:** \$36-18. **Reg:** 12-12:45 p.m. **Time Frame:** 1 to ~6:30 p.m. **Byes:** 0. **Misc:** US Chess memb. req'd. NS, NC.

SCC G/20 Hexes

June 4

Format: 4-SS. Open to U1200 and UNR. **TC:** G/60;+15. **EF:** \$20 (-\$2 SCC members). **Prizes:** SCC membership(s). **Reg:** 9-9:45a.m. **Rds:** 10-12:45-3:30-6. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4—commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess memb. req'd. NS, NC.

SCC Novice

SCC Fridays

One US Chess-rated round per night (free to SCC members, \$5 per night for others) normally played at a rate of 40/90 followed by 30/60. Drop in for any round!

Board Elections 5/5.

May Flowers: 5/5, 12, 19, 26.

Fri. Champions of 2022 (final round): 5/12.

It's Summertime! (Close Ratings): 6/2,9,16,23.

Return of the SCC Annual Meeting & Board Elections

7:30 pm, Friday, May 5th

Emerald City Open

June 24-25

A five-round Swiss with a time control of G/90;+30. The prize fund of \$500 is based on twenty-four paid entries.

First	\$150	U1800	\$70	U1400	\$50
Second	\$100	U1600	\$60	U1200/unr	\$40
Upset (rds 1-3) \$10					

Entry Fees: \$42 if rec'd by 6/19, \$54 at site. **SCC members**—subtract \$11. *GMs, WGMs, IMs, WIMs*—FREE. **Unr**—free with purchase (at SCC) of 1-year US Chess and WCF. **Registration:** Sat. 9-9:45 a.m.

Rounds: Sat. 10-2:30-7, Sun. 11-4:30. **Byes:** 1 (for Sunday rounds, commit at registration).

Miscellaneous: US Chess membership req'd. No smoking. No computers.

Championship: Rising Stars - Round 8 TIME: 40/120,SD/30,+10

White	Black
Devan Reddy Suddi (2.0)	Sankalp Koppala (6.5)
Deeksha Shankaranand (2.0)	Dann Merriman (4.0)
Ikshil Ramkumar (4.5)	Aarav Bharathy Mohan (4.5)
Id Siddem (6.0)	Devanah Sharma (3.0)
Kate Wong (3.0)	Sambhav Koppala (0.5)

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2023 WA State Championship: Rising Stars - Wall Chart

#	Name/Rtg/ID	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Tot
1	Neveen Reddy Suddi 1128 3078321	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2.0
2	NIKHIL Ramkumar 1200 304087 (1206) (102111254)	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	4.5
3	Id Siddem 1267 11102266	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	6.0
4	Kate Wong 1181 11102668 (2800464)	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	3.0
5	Sambhav Koppala 146 11241862	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0.5
6	Devanah Sharma 1238 1642819 (28010786)	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	3.0
7	Aarav Bharathy Mohan 1278 3020681 (28008264)	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	4.5
8	Sankalp Koppala 1260 11241877	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	6.5
9	Dann Merriman 1309 11102668 (28010782)	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	4.0
10	Deeksha Shankaranand 146 3078321	W	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2.0

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