

# CALIFORNIA NORTHERN REGIONAL SCHOLASTIC CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS, APRIL 15-17, 2005

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By Alan Kirshner, PHD

A big thank you to all 916 players and the phenomenal staff and tournament directors that made this event everything that was promised and more. And, what a group of players, TDs and volunteer staff I had. The quality of the players made any title obtained "individual or team" truly meaningful. The best of the best showed, as well as many players who simply wanted to participate in the largest Northern California scholastic event of 2005. The players came in droves, far exceeding the 700 I had anticipated even though they knew this was not the official State championships.

Almost every actively licensed tournament director in Northern California helped to ensure the integrity of the competition. Senior Director Hans Poschmann headed the floor staff and Senior Director Richard Koepcke ran the computer room aided by Assistant National Director John Mc\*\*\*\*isky. I moved the High School and Junior High School Varsity sections into the Crowne Plaza Hotel. They graciously provided me an extra 6,000 square feet for a very minimal charge when I became aware that the 30,000 square feet I had contracted at the San Jose Convention Center next door would be a tight fit for the 900 plus players. Senior Director Allan Fifield arrived from Visalia to take charge of the hotel players in his usual efficient manner. All of the aforementioned were ably assisted by a staff of 15 experienced TDs.

Volunteers from all over California, about 30 people, most of whom had spent years working the State Championships, made the posting of pairings and results as well as the movement of the children fairly effortless. Stephanie Blatt and Phoebe Chen receive my enduring gratitude, not only for the phenomenal leadership of this very important element--the volunteers--of any major tournament, but for their willingness to join my staff again, having worked with me from 1995 until I ceased to do the major tournament in 2000.

I wish I could say all moved smoothly. I had a few glitches which I know is inevitable in a tournament this size. Some were pleasant like selling out all the youth and most of the adult T-shirts days before the tournament began. As many of you know, I continued to promise that the Regionals would broadcast the games of many of the top players into the parents room on a 50 foot screen and across the internet. Well, all in all, I succeeded in keeping my promise thanks to the great knowledge and hard work of Doug Boyle, NM Kerry Lawless, Mark Shelton and FM Bela Evans. However, we did lose the connection to the hotel. Those games were recorded on the sensory boards and can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.ChessDryad.com> along with most of the games from the top boards in all the varsity divisions. The Convention Center did hit me with an unexpected expense. They demand an exorbitant fee for setting up the connection and wanted me to pay \$200 per computer that hooked up to their wireless internet. Thanks to the continuous negotiations of Doug Boyle I got off for a much reduced price, still outrageous for something that should be free. Finally, there was no charge for the computers in the Center that we provided the password to watch the games.

I was also a bit disappointed that we could not get enough victims on Saturday night for the simultaneous play of our two International Masters, Ricardo De Guzman and John Grefe, and our International Master in waiting, Dmitry Zilberstein. John Grefe and Dmitry Zilberstein graciously bowed out. IM De Guzman took on a crew of 17 players of all skills and ages. By winning all the games he saved me the book prizes I had prepared to give for anyone who drew or defeated him. I can at least write that my son Micah, as usual, made me proud, He was the last man left standing. He has this ability to provide that little extra reward for my efforts at running these momentous tournaments. At the 2000 CalChess States, the last event I organized, he won the High School Division and, therefore, represented the Northern California State at the Denker, the tournament of all the state High School champions.

Another regret I had this year, was that our tournament could not determine the Denker or the Polgar (a new all-state women's championship) representatives. The legal settlement between the CalChess President, Elizabeth Shaughnessy, and Richard Peterson, dictated that the CEA CalChess States become the sole tournament for the selection in 2005. My regret was that those top High School players who had a shot at representing CalChess at those tournaments did attend the competing event. Obviously, with their attendance in Oakland, it meant that the victories in that High School Championship were far from empty.

On to some very positive achievements that went forth without any glitches, hitches or regrets. Parents and others really raved about our special presentations. On Saturday, Dan Gertmenian (owner, Chess Prep) spoke on Parental Influence: How to Make Chess Fun for Your Child. NM Eric Schiller (author) on What Your Kids Need to Know About Chess. Eric also brought a number of his best selling chess books with him and generously remained in the lobby to sign copies to any interested players and parents. On Sunday, NM Art Wang demonstrated How to Use the Award Winning Chess Mentor Program to Improve your Child's Chess. Chess Mentor also donated free copies to our winners and announced that anyone at the tournament could download the demo from their chess.com site and if they wanted to purchase the program until the end of May it would be 35% off if they mentioned they had attended the Regionals. Dan Gertmenian did a second presentation on How NOT to Be a Chess Parent and SM David Pruess discussed with parents and children Why He Stayed With Chess After His Years as a Scholastic Player.

The Dr. Pepper dirt bike was won by Darrell Churf of Merced. The Merced coaches brought 43 players and I was happy to see the strength of their program and their excitement at their victories.

All the trophies and awards are listed in this edition and all the results, plus tons of photographs can be located at <http://www.CalNorthYouthChess.org/photographs.html>. I would like to at least highlight some of the top players and teams. Winners received Chess Mentor programs or Saitek chess clocks or computers along with their trophies. The Kindergarten Division drew 27 players and all received trophies with Julie Yeung, Robert Lee Chan, Amit Rao, Alice Bain tying for first place with 4 points out of a possible 5. The Primary School Varsity Division (up to third grade) had 43 competitors and Samuel Bekker (1235) and Yian Liou (956) receiving 4.5 out of 5 points to

be declared co-champions. Weibel Elementary School came out on top of 7 other teams to be the California Northern Regional Primary School Champion. I decided to adhere to the national policy of not having club team awards. Northern California has never set a policy and a standard for what constitutes a club team or when a player can join. This lack of a policy has caused many disputes and hard feelings over the years.

The Primary School Junior Varsity Division was our largestâ€”292 entries. I decided to provide trophies for the top 20 non-rated players, but this came after four unrated players went undefeated (Sundeep Raj, Rachan Narala, Sriram Somasundaram, Tyler Ballesteros) with two rated players (Sophia Luo, 664, Leonardo Framba, 516). Weibel Elementary School narrowly defeated Heather School for the first place team award in this division that sported some 60 teams.

The Elementary School Varsity Division (up to sixth grade) drew some of the toughest competition. The games were a marvel to observe. Daniel Naroditsky (1715), fresh off of being the first Northern Californian to win the Primary School Nationals since the days of Jordy Mont-Reynaud and Vinay Bhat (in the mid-1990â€™s), won a decisive victory going 6 and 0. Daniel had decide to move up to the Elementary School Division from the Primary School to face the best Northern California had to offer. He defeated John Boyle (1587), Steven Zierk (1508)â€”who gave him a run for his money being a rook up at one point, and Partha Vora (1575). The California Northern Regional Team Championship went to Weibel Elementary School who defeated Harker by a half point and Warm Springs by a point. This division had 96 player entries and about 25 teams. By the way, keep on eye on Daniel to see if he can do what Jordy and Vinay did, become a Chess Master at ten and a half. I am betting he will, if not sooner.

The Elementary School Junior Varsity competition also was exceptionally large with 249 entries and about 60 teams. I once again provided a whole set of extra trophies for the unrated players. Three players tied with 6 and 0 scores: Alan Kaptanoglu (783) , Jonathan Tu (777), Abishek Akella (767). The top team award went to Gomes Elementary School who out pointed Weibel by .5. It was soon pointed out by every Weibel player present that Jonathan Tu of Gomes had just transferred there due to his parents move a short while back and was still taking his lessons at Weibel. I told them to be happy to win three out of the four lower division awards. :0)

A number of the Junior High School Varsity players (up to eighth grade) decided at the last moment to compete in the strong High School section. This still left 52 entries and good competition. Sreekar Jasthi (1548) won first with a score of 5.5 out of 6 points. Redwood Middle School won decisively against 19 other teams.

The Junior High School Junior Varsity Division saw 77 entries with Michael Nelson (783) going undefeat for first place. Marin County Day School tied with former CalChess State Champion Egan Junior High School of Sunnyvale for the first place team award.

The High School Varsity Division (up through twelfth grade) had a number of former CalChess State Champions testing their mettle for this title. Ramon Qiu (1769) narrowly defeated (5.5 to 5 points) Wesley Chen (1909) and Kevin Hwa (1608) to take home the Championship trophy. This section had 52 registered in individual play with some 20 teams. Lynbrook High School went home with the California Northern Regional Team Champion title.

The smallest section at the 2005 California Northern Regional Scholastic Chess Championships was the High School Junior Varsity Division with only 23 players. Everyone took home a trophy, but Gregory Kushnir and Alex Fandrianto took home the big trophies after drawing each other. Monache High School returned to Porterville with the first place team trophy.

Once again I want to thank all of you who supported my endeavor to return to producing a class event in Northern California. You are the people who made it possible. And, what of next year? Time will tell!

Chess is Forever!

Alan



