

Eight Year Old Wins Grade 4-5 Chess Championship in California

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by Chris Torres

Chess history was made on April 22, 2012. Ben Rood, while still only eight years old, won first place in the grade 4-5 section at the [Calchess Scholastic State Chess Championship](#).

California has been home to many youthful chess prodigies since I started attending the Calchess Scholastic State Chess Championship. A few that come to mind are Hikaru Nakamura, Samuel Shankland, Jordy Mont-Reynaud, Vinay Bhat, Daniel Naroditsky, Nicholas Nip and Samuel Sevian. Ben Rood's performance at the 2012 Calchess State Scholastic Chess Championship is the best I have ever witnessed by a California chess prodigy under the age of ten.

Ben's victory this weekend was simply immense. Not only did he place first in the strongest 4-5 section in California history; he went through the tournament undefeated. Along the way, Ben Rood defeated talented up and coming players as well as one F.I.D.E. Master.



As fantastic as his performance was, it was not unexpected. During the past two years, Ben has won many state and national titles. In fact, he is the first player in Calchess history to win the Kindergarten Championship, Grade 1-3 Championship and Grade 4-5 Championship in three consecutive years.

Ben Rood's success is truly a combination of talent and hard work. In fact, by the age of eight he has learned more about chess than many old veterans of the game. He began chess study with his mother at age three. When he entered school, Ben started attending chess classes run by the Berkeley Chess School. For one so young, Ben's desire to improve was insatiable. His parents began signing him up for tournaments very regularly and taking him

to the Friday Night Chess program run by the Berkeley Chess School. In spite of winning first place in the Kindergarten section at the 2010 Calchess Scholastic State Championships, Ben had reached the point of needing personal attention to draw out his natural talent. During the summer of 2010 Ben met his current chess coach Chris Torres, president of the [Torres Chess & Music Academy](#), at a chess tournament. Currently, Ben enjoys spending upwards of ten hours a week focusing on chess.

