

Team CalChess are Champions of Champions

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by Tom Langland

Northern California dominated the 2021 National Invitational Tournament of State Champions held in conjunction with the US Open at Cherry Hill, New. Each state was allowed to send their individual state champion for K-5, 6-8, High School, Girls and Senior. Out of the five titles to be awarded, the CalChess representatives won 3 of them as well as the overall State Team Champions!

Coming in clear first in the Barber Middle School Championship was FIDE Master (FM) Vyom Vidyarthi a score of 5.5 out of 6. Vyom seeded #3 on the wallchart, stayed undefeated throughout the event, eliminating his closest rival Terry Lou with a hard-fought battle in the last round. By move 20 Vyom was clearly winning and eventually was up 2 clear pawns. Slowly Terry got back into the game evening the position to a Rook and Pawn endgame, but Vyom was able to achieve the winning Lucena position, keeping Terry's king two files away from his passed pawn.



Vyom Vidyarthi with Mr. Barber!



Henry Deng

In the Rockefeller K-5 Championship, Henry Deng seeded fourth and turned in a consistent performance of 5.0 out of 6 games, finished tied for first place. His last round game was against top seeded Ryo Wenyu Chen rated over 300 points higher than Henry. Henry remained composed while his opponent could figure out whether to try to use his king to guard his own pawns or attack Henry's. Eventually the pawns were traded off and a draw was agreed, leaving Henry with the better tiebreaks of the three players with 5 out of 6.



Ruiyang Yan

The Haring Championship for girls, named after our own Ruth Haring, Ruiyang Yan had already locked up at least a tie for first place after the first five rounds using her considerable experience for her age, at top level play both in the US and Internationally. So even with a last round set-back Ruiyang won 1st place and a \$5000 scholarship with her better tiebreaks.

The Denker Championship of High School Champions was the first tournament of the invitationals to be established, dating back to 1984. Northern California representative Milind Maiti (officially rated 2230) was in a field with a Grandmaster, an International Master and 5 FIDE Masters. After slow start with a first round draw, Milind got 3 wins in the next four rounds, losing only to 2411 rated Shunkai Pend of Oregon. In the last round Milind held his 2424 rated opponent to a draw. Milind performance shows that his recent rating rise to 2340 indicates his studies during COVID-19 has paid off!

The first-place finishers in each of the scholastic events receive a \$5,000 scholarship to a school of higher learning, and winners also receive invitations to the 2022 US Chess national championships for their category: Yan to the U.S. Junior Girls Championship, Vidyarthi to the U.S. Cadet Championship.

Those over age 50 were eligible for the Irwin Senior Championship. This year we were again represented by stalwart IM Elliot Winslow. This was the strongest event, with two GMs and seven IMs vying for the national title. Elliot finished in a tie for 11th place among many other master level players, only losing to the top two finishers.

In the overall team championship, where the scores of each state representative is added up, Northern California with an average rating of 2206 came out on top with a total of 23.0 points, just ahead of the top seeded team from Texas (avg. rating of 2285!) with 22.0 points. The strength of the three 1st place finishes of Vyom, Ruiyang and Henry pooled with outstanding results from Milind and Elliott combined for a great performance for Team CalChess!



Henry, Vyom and Milind with their team awards

Final Standings:

- <https://www.denkerchess.com/wp-content/uploads/2021-Irwin-Standings.pdf>
- <https://www.denkerchess.com/wp-content/uploads/2021-Haring-Standings.pdf>
- <https://www.denkerchess.com/wp-content/uploads/2021-Denker-Standings.pdf>
- <https://www.denkerchess.com/wp-content/uploads/2021-Barber-Standings.pdf>
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