

Spring 2024

# RANK & FILE

Magazine of the Southern California Chess Federation



*Photo courtesy of Jay Stallings*

Event organizer Coach Jay presents the top players at SoCal SuperStates 2024. Woman FIDE Master Angela Liu (State Girls Champion) and David Gasparyan (K-12 Champion) land on top among 566 competitors.

## Top Turnout at SoCal SuperStates '24

By Jay Stallings

Eleven National Masters were among the 566 competitors in mid-March at the 2024 Southern California SuperStates Scholastic Championships.

David Gasparyan finished a full point ahead of the field in the K-12 section. But his was not the only stellar

performance. The event included ten other sections, with five additional state titles awarded (some of them split).

Four of the winners earned the right to represent SoCal at the 2024 National Invitationals in Norfolk, VA this summer.

**Championship Sections (167 players across five sections)**

This event brought together all the scholastic titles that the state offers: Grade K-1, K-3, K-5, K-8, K-12, and State Girls Champion. Side event titles included the State K-12 and K-6 Blitz

*continued on page 7*

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You are welcome to submit content and make  
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2. Be sure to cover who, what, when, where, why,  
and how.
3. Be as brief and clear as possible to avoid heavy  
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or request missing information as needed for  
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8. We do not accept political content or ads.
9. Attach photos to your email in a high-resolution  
jpg or png format. This includes games and  
notations.

DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER 2024 ISSUE IS:

AUGUST 10, 2024.

## Upcoming Southern California Events

**May 25-27**

**44th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day Classic**

80 Grand Prix Points

Van Nuys

**SEE PAGE 5 INSIDE FOR DETAILS**

**Info: [randallhough@gmail.com](mailto:randallhough@gmail.com)**

**On-line entry: [www.scchess.com](http://www.scchess.com)**

**May 26**

**MDC Blitz**

Format: 5-SS, G/5, d/2. Approx 9 pm

Site: Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406.

Prizes: Prize fund will be entries minus expenses.

Info: [randallhough@gmail.com](mailto:randallhough@gmail.com)

EF: \$20, On site registration only

**June 13-16**

**State Championship Invitational**

Temecula

**July 5-7**

**Pacific Southwest Open**

A Heritage Event

Irvine

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# LETTER FROM THE BOARD

The Southern California Chess Federation's Board of Directors is excited to publish the first *Rank & File* issue of 2024.

A new editor has joined our chess community and the board is hopeful that she will help the team of contributors produce timely articles with the quality and consistency expected by our membership.

This issue's cover article features our scholastic state championships known as "SuperStates." The board congratulates the organizers and the TDs for putting together an excellent event. Congratulations to all the winners, especially our state champions who will represent SCCF at the national tournament starting July 27 in Virginia.

Looking ahead, the board will bring back our state championship invita-

tional. Arrangements are underway to run the round robin event at the Temecula Chess Club June 13-16. The six highest rated players in SoCal will be invited to participate.

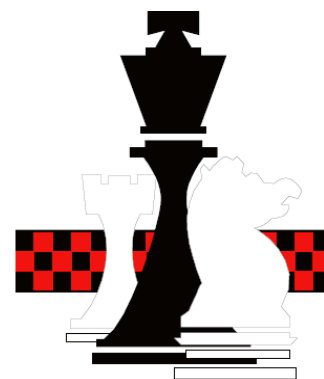
The board is also introducing a new Senior State Championship Open that will grant state titles for 50+ and 65+ age groups. Senior chess has garnered new attention from chess organizers recently. Think FIDE World Individual and Team Championships, USCF Senior Open, and the Irwin National Tournament of State Champions.

SoCal players have fared exceptionally well in these tournaments, with GM Melik Khachiyanyan and GM Vladimir Akopyan ranked first and third, respectively, at the 2023 invitational. GM Enrico Sevillano tied for first at the 2022 Irwin National Tournament.

In this issue, you'll also find SCCF new "Club Roundup" section. The board encourages all clubs in SoCal to contribute to this section by sending articles that showcase events, interesting games, and players among its membership.

Lastly, the board would like to make an appeal to all chess players and chess organizers in SoCal to renew their memberships or become new members. It's through membership fees that the board can sponsor state championships and bring its membership a *Rank & File* magazine that our membership will find valuable and enjoyable.

Sincerely,  
The SCCF Board



2024 Lina Grumette

## Memorial Day Classic

May 25-27

\$17,000 Guaranteed Prize Fund!

### Airtel Plaza Hotel

7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406  
Six Rounds — Swiss System  
3-day schedule 40/80, SD/30, Inc/30  
2-day schedule rounds 1-3 G/45, d/10

### Entry Fees:

\$140 if received by 5/1, \$150 by 5/23, after \$160  
(U1200): \$100 by 5/1, \$110 by 5/23, after \$120  
GM: Free Entry, Under 2000 Entry + \$20 in Open

### On-line entry: [www.scchess.com](http://www.scchess.com)

SCCF membership required (Adults \$20, Under 18 - \$15)  
More details, advance entry lists: [www.scchess.com](http://www.scchess.com)

**On-Site Registration:** ends 9:30 a.m. 5-25  
(3-day), ends 8:30 a.m. 5-26 (2-day)

**Rounds:** 3-day 10-4:30 Sat. & Sun, 9:30-4:30 Mon.  
2-Day 9-11:30-2 Sun (G/45, d/10), then merge with  
3-day at 4:30

**Info:** [randallhough@gmail.com](mailto:randallhough@gmail.com)

**Hotel Rate:** \$119 Airtel Plaza Hotel, (818) 997-7676  
Request Chess Rate,

### Sunday, May 26

**MDC Blitz.** 5-SS, G/5, d/2. Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406. **Prize fund will be entries minus expenses. EF:** \$20. **Reg:** On site registration only **Rounds begin at approximately 9 PM** Higher of Regular or Blitz rating is used. **INFO:** [randallhough@gmail.com](mailto:randallhough@gmail.com)

**For May 25 Scholastic info, see**  
[http://www.scchess.com/calendar\\_kids.html](http://www.scchess.com/calendar_kids.html)

### Open – FIDE Rated

**1st: \$1700 + Trophy**  
Qualifies one for State Invitational  
**2nd-4th: \$900-\$500-\$200**  
**U2250: \$700-\$350-\$300**

### Under 2000

**\$1200-\$700-\$350-\$300**

### Under 1800

**\$1200-\$700-\$350-\$300**

### Under 1600

**\$1200-\$700-\$350-\$300**

### Under 1400

**\$1200-\$700-\$350-\$300**

### Under 1200

**\$1000-\$600-\$350-\$200**

Provisionally Rated limited to 50% of prize except in Open, Unrated. Prize Limits  
U1200:\$100, U1400:\$200, U1600:\$300,  
U1800:\$300, U2000:\$400

No phones allowed on players' person during games

CCA minimum ratings and TD discretion used for integrity

# World Senior Open

By Ala'a-Addin Moussa

The World Senior Chess Championship took place in Terrasini, Italy October 25-November 5, 2023.

It ran in three sections, open 50+, open 65+, and women combined section. I played in the open 50+ section and scored 4.5 points from 11 rounds. Below is my game against Petr Folk from Czech Republic.

Detailed coverage of the event can be found at: <https://new.uschess.org/news/england-wins-double-gold-world-senior-championships>



Photo courtesy of FIDE/UniChess  
Ala'a-Addin Moussa



Photo courtesy of FIDE/UniChess

SCCF President (standing far left) scored four goals and two assists in a friendly soccer match enjoyed by players and organizers of the 2023 World Senior Chess Championship. FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich in center of photo.

[Event "World Senior"]  
[Date "2023.11.02"]  
[Round "8"]  
[White "Moussa, A."]  
[Black "Folk, Petr"]  
[Result "1-0"]  
[ECO "E73"]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Be2 O-O 6. Bg5 Na6 7. Qd2 e5 8. d5 c6 9. f3 cxd5 10. cxd5 Bd7 11. h4 Nc5 12. h5 a5 13. Nh3 b5 14. Nf2 b4 15. Ncd1 Qb8

16. g4 Bb5 17. Ne3 h6 18. Bh4 Ra7 19. Rg1 Bxe2 20. Kxe2 Qb5+ 21. Ke1 Nh7 22. Qe2 Qxe2+ 23. Kxe2 Bf6 24. Bxf6 Nxf6 25. hxc6 fxc6 26. g5 Nh5 27. Nh3 Raf7 28. Raf1 Nf4+ 29. Nxf4 Rxf4 30. gxh6 Kh7 31. Rg3 Rh4 32. Ng4 Rf4 33. Rfg1 Na4 34. b3 Nc3+ 35. Ke3 Kh8 36. Nf2 Rxh6 37. Rxg6 Rxg6 38. Rxg6 Nb5 39. Ng4 Kh7 40. Re6 Kg7 41. Nh6 Rf6 42. Nf5+ Kg6 43. Ne7+ Kf7 44. Rxf6+ Kxf6 45. Nc6 Nc3 46. Nxa5 Nxa2 47. Kd3 Nc3 48. Nc6 Kg5 49. Nxb4 Nb5 50. Nc2 Kf4 51. Ke2 Nc3+ 52. Kf2 Nd1+ 53. Kg2 Nb2 54. b4 1-0

...continued from Cover

Champions. Teams (both club and school) also received recognition.

## K-12 Championship (52 players)



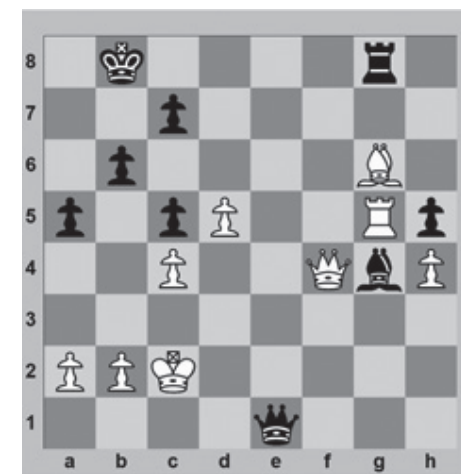
Gasparyan clinched the title when he won his last round game against Elbert Zeng. He had entered the round leading six players by a margin of just a half-point, but none of them earned a full point, so his final game separated him from the field.

The champion provides annotations to his games below.

Elbert Zeng (2155) vs David Gasparyan (2314) [E60]

2024 SoCal SuperStates K-12 (6), 17.03.2024

Position after 36. ... Bg4



37.Bh7?? White makes a serious blunder under time pressure. Black wins the game quickly.

37.b3! The only move which would give

the White chances to save the game 37...Qe2+ 38.Kc3 Qxa2 39.d6 Qa1+ 40.Kc2 Qd1+ 41.Kb2 Qxd6

37...Re8 38.Rg7 Bd1+ 39.Kb1 Bb3+ White Resigned 0-1

In Round 2, Gasparyan attacked early and often for a win in just 19 moves.

David Gasparyan (2314)-Davit Gevorgyan (2029) [B31]

2024 SoCal SuperStates K-12 (2), 16.03.2024

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 g6 4.0-0 Bg7 5.c3 Nf6 6.d4 Nxe4 The engine likes this move, however, it is really difficult to equalize the position in a practical game.

In my opinion 6...cxd4 is the better.

7.d5 Nd6 8.Bd3 Ne5 8...Na5 is best, but as I mentioned above it is too hard to find such strange moves like Na5.

9.Nxe5 Bxe5 10.Re1

10...Bf6? 10...Bg7 allows Black to castle. 11.Qe2 0-0 12.Qxe7 Qxe7 13.Rxe7 Re8 and White is slightly better, but at least Black's king is safe.

11.Bh6 b5? 11...Nf5 12.Bxf5 gxf5 13.Qh5 d6 is still better for White, however Black has some chances to survive.

12.Qf3!+- Nf5 13.Bxf5 gxf5 14.d6 Rb8

15.Bg7!! Bxg7 16.Rxe7+ Qxe7 16... Kf8 17.Qxf5

17.dxe7 Kxe7?? [JS: Allowing a devastating fork.]

18.Qg3! Bb7 19.Qxg7 Black Resigned 1-0

## Angela Liu Interview

WFM Angela Liu (with a performance rating of 2343!) lost only to Gasparyan, taking 2.5 from the three FIDE Masters

she faced over the final four rounds! Amazingly, she only finished half a point ahead of three females who all won their final games in an effort to earn the right to represent Southern California at the Haring Tournament of State Girls Champions. She offered some personal insights on the event and her play.

"I was looking forward to the SuperStates as I didn't get a chance to play an OTB tournament since December last year. On the first day of SuperStates, I won all three games, including a win against last year's champion in the third round. I was hoping to keep my winning streak for the second day but didn't put too much pressure on myself.

For the fourth round, I was paired against Teddie Wen who is a very strong FM and also won his first three games. I lost to him in other tournaments before. When I heard the pairing, I reminded myself just to focus on the game, not my opponent's rating. I managed my time very well in this game. At some point, I had 30 minutes more than my opponent. My opponent was under huge time pressure, and he was itching for counterplay. After winning this game, I became the front runner for the K-12 Championship."

WFM Angela Liu (2089) - FM Teddie Wen (2318) [A49]

2024 SoCal SuperStates K-12 (6), 17.03.2024

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.b3 c6 7.Bb2 Qc7 8.Re1 a5 9.e4 Bg4 10.h3 Bxf3 11.Qxf3 e5 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.a4 Nbd7 14.Na3 Rfe8 15.Rad1 Nb6 16.Qe3 Nfd7 17.Bf1 Bf8 18.Qf3 Bb4 19.Re3 Bc5 20.Red3 Re6 21.R3d2 Bb4 22.c3 Be7 23.Nc4 Rf6 24.Qd3 Nc5 25.Qc2 h5 26.h4 Ne6 27.Ne3 Be5 28.Qd3 Qe7 29.Bh3 Re8 30.Qe2

30...Nf4!! This earns two exclams because only a computer can find the winning plan against it.

31.gxf4 exf4

32.Nf1 Missing the engine-move 32.Nf5!! The same sacrifice (knight for a g-pawn), but this looks murky until you see the power of White's bishop on b2 combined with the rooks that will invade on the 8th rank, the queen on the h-file, and even the light-squared bishop guarding key squares while also being set to join the attack! 32...gxf5 33.Qxh5 Qxe4 34.c4 Rg6+ 35.Kh2 A glance might give the impression that it is White's king that is precarious, but it is, in fact, the black monarch that will soon suffer the slings and arrows of all of White's pieces! 35...Re5 36.Rd8+

32...f3 33.Qe1 Rf4 34.Ng3 Qxh4 Black is winning, but the position is complex, and Angela (White) has a large time advantage.

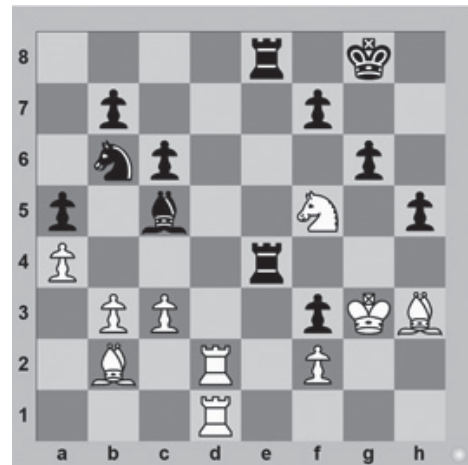
35.Kh2

35...Qg5 Black needed one more piece to join the fray: 35...Nd5! Unless captured, the knight will go to g4 via f6.

36.Qg1 Rh4 37.Nf5! Angela starts a plan that will simplify the position. Teddie fights for imbalance, but this was the time to lower his result expectations.

37...Qf4+? Suddenly, White is winning.

38.Qg3 Qxg3+ 39.Kxg3! Rhxe4



40.Nd6! After this, Angela cruises to victory.

40...Bxd6+ 41.Rxd6 h4+ 42.Kxf3 Nd5

43.c4 Nb4 44.Rd8 g5 45.Rxe8+ Rxe8 46.Bf6 Kh7 47.Rd8 Re6 48.Bf5+ Black Resigned 1-0

### The Invitationals

US Chess hosts five state-related invitationals at the US Open each year. These events include 52 representatives from all 50 states and Washington D.C. (California is divided into North & South). Players in the four scholastic invitationals are usually determined by tournaments such as SuperStates.

**Grades 9-12** (GM Arnold Denker Tournament of State High School Champions)

**Grades 6-8** (Barber Tournament of State Middle School Champions)

**Grades K-5** (Rockefeller Tournament of State K-5 Champions)

**State Girls Champion** (WIM Ruth Haring Tournament of State Girl Champions)

The official runner-up (and alternate to the Denker) was Alex Wang. Alex won his first three games, but his shared points in the final three rounds landed him in second place only after going to the second tie-break.

Arcadia High School (FM Teddie Wen and FM Tommy Wen) won the title of State High School Chess Team Champions, while the International Children Education Association (ICEA) Chess is the Club Champion of the 2024 K-12 Championship section.

### Chess Prodigies, 1000GM, and SCCF Support SuperStates!

More than \$10,000 in scholarships and travel stipends will be awarded to winners of the K-5, 6-8, 9-12, and Girls Champion (top in the K-12) this year. The relatively new nonprofit, Chess Prodigies, received \$8,000 from 1000GM to support the 1000GM Scholarship Fund.

Additionally, Dewain Barber of Chess Prodigies and the Southern California Chess Federation pledge \$400 to each player who represents SoCal at the 2024 National Invitationals.

The recipients of the \$4,000 scholarships were David Gasparyan and WFM Angela Liu, as the winners of the K-12 and the State Girls Champion, respectively. Along with the top finisher in the K-8 and the K-5, they will each receive \$800 in travel stipends after completing their section games in early August at the Invitationals in Norfolk, Virginia.

*Individuals and organizations: Please consider a tax-deductible donation to Chess Prodigies or the Southern California Chess Federation in support of scholastic players!*

### K-8 Championship (39 players)

Ranked ninth by rating, Sultai Chyngyz won all six games, including victories against two NMs on his way to earning the title of 2024 SoCal Middle School Champion. He has earned the right to represent Southern California at the Barber Tournament of Middle School Champions.

K-8 Final Individual Standings: 1<sup>st</sup>: CM Sultai Chyngyz (6.0 points); 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bryan Xie (5.0); 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>: Julian Colville and Forest Sherwood (4.5).

ICEA Chess (16 team points) won the K-8 Championship Club Team Award one point ahead of Beyond Chess (15). Mesa Verde Middle School (6.5) finished tie-break points ahead of John Muir Middle School to win the title of 2024 K-8 Championship School Team.

### K-5 Championship (27 players)

Glenn Zhang & Jacob Wang drew their final round encounter on Board 1, and Rohan Daftuar beat potential co-champion Yi Shuo Sun on Board 2 to leave the Board 1 players as co-champions of the section.

K-5 Final Individual Standings: Co-

Champions: Glenn Zhang & Jacob Wang (5.0); 3<sup>rd</sup>: Rohan Daftuar (4.5); 4-5<sup>th</sup>: Yi Shuo Sun and Jeffrey Wei (4.0).

Beyond Chess (16.5), led by the co-champions, took the K-5 Club Team Champions title over San Diego Chess Club (14).

### K-3 Championship (22 players)

Howard Wang and Wesley Kwan are the 2024 K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Co-Champions of Southern California! Howard lost to third place finisher, Winston Wang (not related to Howard), but leapfrogged him in the final round after Wesley won against Winston (who had been a half-point ahead of both of them).

K-3 Final Individual Standings: Co-Champions: Howard Wang and Wesley Kwan (5); 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>: Winston Wang and Benjamin Yu (4.5). 5<sup>th</sup>: Ryan Lu (4).

Team members from Beyond Chess took four of the top five spots, securing an easy title for this K-3 team (18 points). Simply Chess (8.5) finished second with only two players!

### K-1 Championship (27 players)

Renaë Chen played only Top Ten finishers in her section and yielded just a draw to the top seed en route to a share of the 2024 K-1 Champion's title along with Jayson Chen (not related). They each scored four wins and one draw.

K-1 Final Individual Standings: Co-Champions: Renaë Chen and Jayson Chen (4.5); 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>: Brian Ye, Danica Chang, and Leonardo Lien (4.0); 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>: Andrew Deutsch and Ojas Daftuar (3.5).

The 2024 K-1 Club Team Champion is Beyond Chess (14.5), followed by San Diego Chess Club (12.5). Agbu Manoogian-demirdjian School won the title of State K-1 School Team Champions.

**Junior Varsity Sections** (275 players across 5 sections)

The JV Sections played a 5x2 Swiss (play each of your 5 opponents twice – once with White, once with Black).

### K-12 Under 1600 (27 players)

K-12 Under 1600 Individual Standings: 1<sup>st</sup> Place: JC Abadesco (9); 2<sup>nd</sup>: Prince Rohatgi (7.5); 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>: Sebastian Burns & Vinson Nguyen (7.0).

1<sup>st</sup> Place Club Team: Beyond Chess (18.5); 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: San Diego Chess Club (14)

1<sup>st</sup> Place School Team: Whittier High School (14.5); 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: John Burroughs HS (8.5)

### K-8 Under 1400 (86 players)

K-8 Under 1400 Individual Standings: 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Ashot Martirosyan, Gary Boyle, Rohit Pande (8.5); 4<sup>th</sup>: Isaac Lien.

1<sup>st</sup> Place Club Team: American Chess Academy (31.5); 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: Beyond Chess (29.5); 3<sup>rd</sup> Team: Wing Chess (26).

1<sup>st</sup> Place School Team: John Muir Middle School (17); 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: Agbu Manoogian-Demirdjian School (13).

### K-6 Under 1000 (39 players)

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Jolin Jiang & Chetan Somysetty (8); 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>: Bhavik Chikkala, Raffi Tsaturyan, Piers Arnold, Kiaan Sangani, and Alexander Chen (7.0).

1<sup>st</sup> Place Club Team: Wing Chess (26.5); 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: Beyond Chess (21); 3<sup>rd</sup> Team: San Diego Chess Club (14).

### K-6 Under 700 (78 players)

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Samvel Sargsyan (8.5); 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Place: Youngjun Choi, Temuu Sumiyabazar, and Ethan Nastro (8.0).

1<sup>st</sup> Place Club Team: American Chess Academy (29), 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: San Diego Chess Club (26.5); 3<sup>rd</sup> Team: Wing Chess (25.5).

1<sup>st</sup> Place School Team: John Muir Middle School (24); 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: Agbu Manoogian-Demirdjian School (21.5).

### K-3 Under 700 (45 players)

Two young girls finished 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, far above the field in this section.

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Bella Zhu (9.0); 2<sup>nd</sup>: Katherine Licon (8.5); 3<sup>rd</sup>: Ryan Yu (7.5)

1<sup>st</sup> Place Club Team: Beyond Chess (31.5); 2<sup>nd</sup> Team: San Diego Chess Club (25); 3<sup>rd</sup> Team: American Chess Academy (19)

1<sup>st</sup> Place School Team: Agbu Manoogian-Demirdjian School (17)

**Rookie Sections** (124 players across 2 sections)

These were 5-round Swisses played on Saturday (K-2) and Sunday (K-4).

### K-2 Under 200 (54 players)

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Nicholas Chang and Jonathan San Luis (5.0)

1<sup>st</sup> Place School Team: Laurence

### K-4 Under 400 (69 players)

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Stanley Ung (5.0); 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>: Ariston Zhang & Ella Rose Shifman (4.5)

1<sup>st</sup> Place School Team: Laurence

### **Blitz**

Innay Velore won the title of **K-12 SoCal Blitz Champion** with 8/10.

Gavin Tjipto won the **K-6 Blitz** title with 8.5/10.

### **One Last Note**

Coach Jay's Chess Academy and ICEA Chess ran this event. Special thanks to the excellent TD staff and volunteers who oversaw 2,386 games with only a handful of issues.

*From Coach Jay: I'd like to thank my wife, Michél, who has supported me in running SuperStates since 2011. Next year, I look forward to being able to coach my teams!*

# Dreaming King Open

By Chuck Ensey

The 9th Annual 2024 Dreaming King Open was held at the Sonesta LAX hotel for the second year in a row. The SCCF moved the event to the Los Angeles area due to affordability. San Diego previously hosted the DKO, but the increase in post-pandemic hotel ballroom prices required the board to re-evaluate its location. The move proved successful, with Sonesta offering an excellent experience and a central location for Southern California players.

## Background

Let's start with a little history of the DKO before we get into the details of this year's event. The first annual tournament was held in 2015. Named after the great civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., it is always held on the holiday weekend named in his honor. A much anticipated tournament, it has only been cancelled once in 2020 due to COVID-19.

## Goals

This year, DKO took place January 13-15 with 240 players (7 more than last year). The increased turnout allowed for a \$20,000 guaranteed prize fund and covered all of the event's expenses. The SCCF would like to thank all participants and attendees for making this possible! With the DKO growing in popularity every year, a goal of 300 players and a larger prize fund seems well within reach.

## Games

There were six rounds and seven sections: Open, U2100, U1900 and every 200 points down to the bottom U1100 section. Most of the sections had about 30 players, but the Open had 56 and was FIDE rated with Randall Hough as the FIDE arbiter.

TDs Jim Harrell and I, Chuck Ensey, helped direct the lower sections. It included the choice of either a 3-day or 2-day schedule, with 113 players opting for the 2-day schedule. Seven players re-entered the 2-day from the 3-day for an added \$75 fee--a move that does not always pay off. For two players this year, it did.

But the players who did not see a payoff also benefitted in other ways. They got a fresh start and the opportunity to improve, although they had to be good at faster time control of G/40;d5 (the 3-day is G/100+30).

Many players prefer the increment with no second time control because it does away with disputes over making the 40th move. This can become a point of contention when players do not record their moves correctly, which can happen often. It is difficult to lose on time with a 30-second increment and play over the board almost always determines the winner rather than who can punch the clock faster.

## Final Thoughts

The tournament went smoothly, with all rounds starting on time and quiet conditions in the large playing hall. A "no talking or lingering" pol-

icy in the long hallway leading up to the single entrance at the far end of the main ballroom helped. The 2-day participants played in a separate room, which also kept noise levels down for the 3-day players. There were two large extra rooms for parents and players whose games had ended.

Arthur Macaspac helped players analyze their completed games. "Oh, I had a win, until I made that one stupid move," seemed to be a common complaint among many chess players. But to err is human, and in chess, it is especially hard to play an error-free game.



Photo courtesy of Chess Media 1

IM John Bryant annotates two of his games.

## Top Players

Here are the players who managed to keep their errors to a minimum:

Open Section - a four-way tie for 1st and 4th places between players with scores of 5 out of 6: GM Arman Mikaelyan, GM Andrii Baryshpolets, IM John Bryant, FM Vatsal Singhanian, each won \$1,425. BU2300: David Gasparyan (4 1/2), \$1,000, 5th Place: IM Dionisio Aldama (4 1/2), \$400; 6th Place: IM Robert Shlyakhtenko (4), \$275 and also scoring 4 points for \$275 were Brian Leano, Yanfeng Guo and Andrew Wang for 7th Place/2nd U2300.

U2100 Section - 1st Place: Sarthak

Gattani (5), \$1,200; 2nd/4th Place: Ephraim Rosenstock, Avik Sarkis-haratounian and Seryozha Gasparyan (4 1/2) for \$400 each.

U1900 Section-1st Place: Mason Welch (6), \$1,200; 2nd/4th Place: a 4-way tie for \$300 each - Jack Fang, Gavin Tjipto, Ryuta Nunez and Marlon Icban (4 1/2).

U1700 Section-1st Place: Ethan Huynh (5), \$1,200. 2nd/4th Place: Francis Ordanza (4.5) and Kai Kettering (4.5) for \$500 each; Yi Shuo Sun, (4.5, provisional), \$200.

U1500 Section - 1st/2nd Place: Garrett Lycett & Matthew Gabriel (5), \$800 each;

3rd Place: Jet Lew (4 1/2), \$400, four others for 4th with 4 points for \$50

each. U1300 Section-1st Place: Dan Ruskin (6), but provisionally rated, so only \$300, also winning \$300 were Kevin Abdalla, Andrew You and Eric Xiao (4.5) for 2nd/4th. U1100 Section-1st/3rd: Evan Chang, Alex Huynh and Arthur Bai, all with 5 points for \$367 each; 4th Place: Kellen Lee (4), \$100.

## For more details

Please see the SDCC website at [www.sandiegochessclub.org](http://www.sandiegochessclub.org) for a full list of prize winners. Full wall charts and post-event ratings can be found on the USCF website at [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org).

[White "Dommoraju, Ashwin"]  
[Black "Bryant, John"]  
[Result "0-1"]  
[ECO "C45"]

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 exd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nxc6 bxc6 6. e5 Qe7 7. Qe2 Nd5 8. h4 a5 (8... f6=) 9. c4 Ba6 10. g3 Qb4+ (10... f6=) 11. Nd2 Bc5 12. a3 ( 12. Qh5 Ne7 13. Bd3 Bd4 14. O-O c5 15. Nf3 Bxc4 16. Bd2 Qb5 17. e6!! Bxd3 18. Qxf7+ Kd8 19. Nxd4 cxd4 20. Bg5 Bxf1 21. Qxe7+ Kc8 22. Rxf1 dxe6 23. Qxg7 Re8 24. Qxd4 Ra6 unclear) 12... Qb6 13.



Ne4 Bd4 14. Qd1? (14. Qc2! Ne7 15. c5 Qb7 16. Bf4) (14. Qg4!?) 14... f5! 15. exf6 O-O 16. Qc2 16... Rae8 17. cxd5 cxd5 18. Bxa6 Qxa6 19. Qb3 Rxe4+ 20. Be3 Bxe3 (20... c6 21. O-O-O Bxf6 22. Rd2 Be5 23. Qd3 Qxd3 24. Rxd3 d4) 21. Qxd5+? (21. fxe3) 21... Qe6 22. Qxe6+ Rxe6 23. fxe3 Rxe3+ 24. Kd2 Rxc3 25. Rhg1 Rxc3 26. Rxc3 Rxf6 27. Rg5 Ra6 28. Rb5 Kf7 29. Rb7 Rc6 30. Rb5 Rb6 31. Rxa5 Rxb2+ 32. Kc3 Rh2 33. h5 Ke6 34. Rg5 Kd6 35. a4 Kc6 36. a5 h6 37. Rg6+ d6 38. Rxc3 Rxc3 39. Kb4 Rb5+ 40. Ka4 Rc5 41. Kb4 Kb7 42. Rg8 Rg5 43. Rh8 Rg4+ 44. Kc3 Ra4 45. Rxh6 Rxa5 0-1

[White "Bryant, John"]  
[Black "Singhanian, Vaisal"]  
[Result "1-0"]  
[ECO "B22"]

1. e4 c5 2. c3 Nf6 3. e5 Nd5 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. Bc4 Nb6 6. Bb3 c4 7. Bc2 d5 8. exd6 e5 9. O-O Bxd6 10. d4 cxd3 11. Qxd3 Bc7 (11... Be6 {Hans' move})

12. Qxd8+ (12. Qe2!?) 12... Kxd8? (12... Bxd8 13. Nxe5 (13. Na3 a6 14. Be3 Nd5 15. Bc5 Be7 16. Bxe7 Kxe7 17. Rad1 Be6 18. Ng5 Rad8 19. Nxe6 Kxe6 20. Nc4 b5 21. Nd2 f5 22. Nb3 Kf6 23. Nc5 Na5 24. Nxa6 Nc4 25. Bb3 Ndb6 26. Bxc4 Nxc4 27. b3 Nd2 28. Rfe1 Rd7) 13... Nxe5 14. Re1 Bc7 15. f4 Nbc4 16. fxe5 O-O! (16... Nxe5 17. Bf4 f6 18. Na3 white slightly better) 13. Na3 a6 14. Be3 f6 15. Rfd1+ Ke8 (15... Ke7) 16. Nd2 Nd5? 17. Bc5 Be6 18. Nac4 (18. Ne4!+-) 18... b5? (18... b6 19. Ba3 b5) 19. Nd6+ (19. Ne3) 19... Kd7 20. N2e4 f5 21. Nxf5 Bxf5 22. Rxd5+ Ke6 23. Rd2 Na5 24. Rad1 Rad8 25. Ng5+ Kf6 26. Rxd8 Rxd8 27. Rxd8 Bxd8 28. Nxc7+ Kg6 29. Nf8+ Kf6 30. Bxf5 Kxf5 31. Nd7 Nc4 32. b3 Nd2 33. Nb8 a5 34. Nc6 Bc7 35. Na7 a4 36. Nxb5 axb3 37. axb3 Nxb3 38. Bf8 Bb6 39. Bxc7 Nd2 40. Bh6 Ne4 41. Be3 Bxe3 42. fxe3 Ke6 43. c4 Nd2 44. Na3 Kd6 45. Kf2 Kc5 46. Ke2 Ne4 47. Nb1 1-0

# Cy's Perspective: The Beginner's Trap Variation?

By IM Cyrus Lakdawala

[Event "2023 US Absolute Ch"]  
[Site "ICCF"]  
[White "Keith A Rodriguez"]  
[Black "Frederick Rhine"]  
[Result "1/2-1/2"]  
[ECO "C42"]  
[WhiteElo "2361"]  
[BlackElo "2200"]

Cy's Perspective: The Beginner's Trap Variation? Have you noticed that the opening choices of even top level players continue to grasp at eccentricity, in a defiant attempt to evade Overlord Theory's commands? First there was the tiresome Bong Cloud Opening fad, where even world champions were starting their games with 1 e4 e5 2 Ke2!?, which got less and less funny as it was played. It was as if you told your friend a joke and he responded "Ha ha! Good one!" and then encouraged, you repeated the exact same joke, hoping it would be even funnier in its second incarnation. Then Magnus began opening rapid games with 1 f3. Anyway, you get the picture. Yet not all new opening trends were unsound or down right silly. About a year ago at last year's U.S. Championship, the young GM Awonder Liang drew with Fabi Caruana with what I always believed was a beginner's trap! We all know that Petroff is a super solid option to King's Pawn openings. But Awonder played Damiano Variation which loses by force for Black! Apparently not. The engines have worked out

all kinds of defensive ideas for Black and today, I'm convinced that the line is sound. So much so, that I'm working on a book on the Damiano. When I began examining the line deeper, I came to the astonishing conclusion that the "refuted" verdict is pure nonsense, since the engines side with Damiano, not White! If your goal as Black is to hold a draw, then the Damiano is a perfectly sound option. Then later, my ex-student, Frederick Rhine, played it in the 2023 U.S. Correspondence Chess Championship, holding three higher rated opponents to draws with the Damiano. Frederick writes about the following game: "This game was played in the 2023 USCF Absolute Championship, which is open to the top 13 correspondence chess players in the country who accept their invitations. My opponent Keith A Rodriguez is an IMC (International Master of Correspondence Chess). I have the fourth highest USCF correspondence rating, primarily because I mostly earned it in 1994-97, when the best players had higher ratings than they do today. I am the highest-ranked player who accepted the invitation to play in the tournament. (The tournament uses ICCF rather than USCF ratings. Since I hadn't played in ICCF before, I was given a provisional rating of 2200.)" Frederick effortlessly neutralized three strong opponents with the Damiano. Here are two of his games:} 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3.

Nxe5 Nxe4!?

Dear Santa: For Christmas, I want a pony! Can engines render a former mistake into a playable line? Welcome to Cognitive Dissonance 101. Wait a minute. Isn't this just a beginner's trap? White wins a piece by simply moving the queen to e2, right? Wrong. Please prepare for an intellectual summersault. This is the starting position of the Damiano Petroff.

4. Qe2 Qe7!

All other moves lose. Before you shake your head in reproach, keep in mind that the piece sacrifice is just temporary.

5. Qxe4 d6 6. d4 dxe5 7. dxe5 Nc6 8. Nc3

Caruana tried 8. Bb5 on Awonder Liang and was held to a draw as well! Bd7 9. Nc3 O-O-O 10. Bf4 Qb4! 11. O-O-O Qxe4 12. Nxe4 Nxe5! 13. Bxd7+ Nxd7 14. Ng5 Be7! 15. h4 {Caruana,F-Liang,A USA-ch Saint Louis 2022 (9)} (15. Nxf7 is well met with Rdf8 16. Nxb8 Rxf4 17. Rhe1 Kd8! 18. Re6 Rf8 19. Ng6 hxg6 20. Rxb6 Bf6 when Black stands no worse.)

In this position Black completely equalizes with 15... Rde8!)

In both this game and the next, Frederick's opponents played the line which is commonly considered the "refutation" of the Damiano--except it isn't! White's idea is to return the extra pawn, in exchange for a dangerous looking endgame

development lead. The trouble is if you play out engine versus engine in this position, Black draws 100% of the games! 8... Qxe5 9. Qxe5+ Nxe5 10. Nb5 {How on Earth can Black survive the development lag? Watch. The engines have worked it out!} ({Next game Frederick's opponent tried the other "refutation" with} 10. Bf4)

10... Bb4+! {This way Black achieves at least one healing swap.} 11. Bd2! {With bishops off the board, Black must make a serious concession to defend c7.}

(11. c3 is inferior and allows Black to equalize immediately with Ba5. This is a training game I played against a student: 12. Bf4 f6 13. Bxe5 fxe5 14. Bc4 Bd7 15. Na3 O-O-O 16. O-O-O Bb6 17. f3 Be3+ 18. Kb1 Bf5+ {Black already stands slightly better.} 19. Ka1 Rhe8 20. Rhe1 Bd2! 21. Re2 Bf4! {Playing on White's weak back rank.} 22. Rh1 e4! (22... Bxh2?? is a terrible blunder since the trapper gets trapped after 23. g4! Black loses a piece without compensation.) 23. fxe4 Rxe4 24. Rxe4? {He should have pushed his g-pawn one square forward.} Bxe4 25. Be6+ Kb8 26. Bh3 { Exercise (combination alert): How does Black win material? Answer: Weak back rank.} Bxh2! {The bishop of course is immune from capture.} 27. Nc4 Bg3 {0-1 Negus-,M-Lakdawala,C Training game 2023 Black simply begins to push h and g-pawns, and White's position is hopeless.})

11... Bxd2+ 12. Kxd2 Kd8 {This is the only way to protect c7.} 13. Re1 Nd7! (I prefer the retreat to d7 over

13... f6 which I don't believe fully equalizes.)

The prisoner is subjected to a full-body cavity search. Welcome to paradise! Have you ever seen a more frumpy position than Black's? Me neither. Yet external impressions aside, the engines tell us that Black's position isn't submerged into an ocean of mediocrity, for the following reasons: 1. This line is White's optimal one against Damiano and it's unlikely that Black will win. On the other hand, neither is it likely that Black will lose. 2. White DOES get practical chances, since Black is on the defensive and it's more difficult to defend than attack. So in real life over-the-board play, White may indeed win one or two games out of 10, which would place in line into normal statistical parameters.}

14. Nd4 (14. Bc4 is met with Rf8!) 14... Re8 Theoretical Novelty, the idea of which is to seek relief via trades. (14... Nb6 is Black's main move. 15. h4 Bd7 16. h5 h6 17. Rh4 Re8 18. Rhe4 Rxe4 19. Rxe4 Nc8! 20. Re5 Nd6 {The engine assessment is dead even Durarbayli,V (2618)-Safarli,E (2618) AZE-ch Final 77th Baku 2023 1-0 .}

15. Bc4 (15. Rxe8+ Kxe8 16. Nb5 Kd8 17. Bc4 Ne5 18. Bb3 Bd7 19. Re1 f6 20. Nd4 a5! {Black activates the rook in the corner.} 21. f4 Ng6 22. g3 Ra6! {Once again, dead even according to the engine.})

15... Ne5 16. Bd5 Re7! 17. f4 (17. Re2 f6 18. Rhe1 c5 19. f4 Ng6 20. Rxe7 Nxe7 21. Ne6+ Bxe6 22. Bxe6 Kc7 {The engine calls it even.})

17... Ng6 18. Rxe7 Kxe7 19. Re1+ Kf8



{Do you like Black's antiseptic position, devoid of distinguishing characteristics? Well I don't either. Yet if our goal is to avoid a loss, then it doesn't seem so awful anymore. It feels as if multiple misfortunes befall Black, yet looks deceive. Let's give the position a sober assessment: 1. White leads in development, while Black's queenside pieces are asleep. 2. White's problem of course is the absence of viable targets.}

20. g3 Ne7 21. Bf3 g6 22. b4 {White begins to gain space on the queenside.} h5 23. c4 a5 24. b5 Rb8! {Now Black's bishop can be developed.} 25. Re5 Bg4!? (Another way to draw is 25... Nf5 which is even, according to the engine.) 26. Bxg4 (26. Bg2 Rd8 27. Kc3 b6 28. c5 Nf5! Black doesn't stand even an iota worse.) 26... hxg4 27. Kc3 Rd8 28. a3 Rd7 29. c5 f6! {The e5-squatter is evicted.} 30. Re2 {Correspondence IM Rodriguez, realizing that any advantage he had is now in past tense, offered a draw.} (30. Re6 Kf7 31. Re2 Rd8 is just fine for Black.) 1/2-1/2

[Event "2023 USCF Absolute Ch"]  
 [Site "ICCF"]  
 [White "John C Walton"]  
 [Black "Frederick Rhine"]  
 [Result "1/2-1/2"]  
 [ECO "C42"]  
 [WhiteElo "2360"]  
 [BlackElo "2200"]

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 Nxe4!  
 Welcome to Planet Outlandish. We hope you enjoy your stay. 4. Qe2 Qe7 5. Qxe4 d6 6. d4 dxe5 7. dxe5 Nc6 8. Nc3 Qxe5 9. Qxe5+ Nxe5 10. Bf4 Here we have "refutation" number 2, where White attempts to punish the renegade blasphemer. You guessed it: engines hold the draw every time from this position, with the black pieces. Bd6 11. Bg3 This loss of a tempo is necessary. (11. Nb5?! walks into our mini-strategic cheapo after Nf3+! 12. Ke2! (12.



gxf3? Bxf4 is strategically awful for White.) 12... Nd4+! 13. Nxd4 Bxf4 (Black is just fine, due to ownership of the bishop pair, Tabatabaei,M (2629)-Ponkratov,P (2631) PNW-CC Bullet ) op Lichess.org INT blitz 2020 1/2-1/2)) 11... h5! {This space-gaining idea is an improve-

ment over the older 11... f6 which was championed by IM Volkmann.} 12. O-O-O (12. Nb5 h4 13. Nxd6+ cxd6 14. Bf4 Bf5 15. O-O-O Rc8 is similar to how Frederick's game went, Pichot,A (2637)-Gaitan,J (2358) ARG-ch 97th San Carlos de Bariloche 2022 (9) 1-0) 12... f6 13. Nb5 h4 14. Nxd6+ cxd6 15. Bf4 g5! 16. Be3 Ke7

Let's gather the data:

1. White picked up the bishop pair. 2. Black nurses an isolani on the open d-file. 3. Black must deal with a hole on d5. 4. Black's king is centralized, put to work, while White's is slightly offside 5. Black gathered territorial gains on the kingside. 6. Is Black's d-pawn really a weakness? It can easily be defended, just as White can attack it. 7. Black may soon generate play down the open c-file by doubling rooks on it.

Conclusion: White's advantage is a mental construct with no inherent reality of its own. White's position looks far more wonderful than it actually is and Black's "show me!" attitude is justified.}

17. h3 Bf5 18. b3 Rac8 19. Rd2 Rc7 {Black's future counterplay stems from pressure on c2.} 20. Kb2 (20. Bxa7? Rhc8! 21. c4 b5! 22. Bd4 bxc4 {White is in deep trouble since 23. b4?? is met devastatingly with c3 winning.} 20... Rhc8 21. c4 a6 22. Be2 b5! The Benko Gambit Variation of the Damiano? No child is left behind. This way a black rook infiltrates c2, at the cost of giving White

two connected passed pawns on the queenside. Frederick's move is more dynamic than just shuffling and waiting to see how White improves his position. The engine evaluation is even at this point.}

23. cxb5 Rc2+ 24. Ka1 Rxd2 25. Bxd2 Rc2 26. Rd1 axb5 27. Bxb5 g4!

Weirdly enough, Black generates counterplay, despite White's two passed queenside pawns. 28. hxg4 Bxg4 29. f3 Bh5! {The undermining ...h4-h3 is coming and amazingly, Black generates enough counterplay.} 30. b4 h3! 31. Ba4! (31. g4?? loses instantly to Bf7! targeting a2 and it's time for White to resign. 32. a4 Bd5! 33. Bf4 Bxf3 34. Rf1 h2) 31... Rc4! {...Rd4 is a serious threat and White's kingside structure has been undermined. The position remains even.}

32. gxh3 (32. g4?? Be8 33. Bxe8 (33. Bb3 Rd4! leaves White paralyzed. White is dead lost, due to the passed h-pawn.) 33... Kxe8 34. Be1 Rc2 {There is no need to consult an oracle to undersand that White is unable to survive Black's h-pawn.}

32... Nxf3 33. a3 Rh4! 34. Bc3 Rxh3 35. Rc1 Nd4! 36. Bb2 (36. Bxd4?! Rxa3+ 37. Kb2 Rxa4 It is White who works to achieve a draw.) 36... Nb3+! {The position is as blank as an empty plate and the opposite colored bishops ensure the game will end in a draw.} (36... Nb3+! 37. Bxb3 Rxb3 38. Rf1 Bf3 is drawn.) 1/2-1/2

# Western Class Open

By Ala'a-Addin Moussa

The 31st Annual Western Class Championship took place March 1-3 in Irvine. The Master section drew 45 participants, including five GMs. It ended with a five-way tie (four points out of five rounds).

The tie included:

- GM Andry Baryshpolets of Ukraine
- GM Fidel Corrales Jimenez of New York
- IM Justin J. Sarkar of New York (Sarkar took two byes in the first two rounds)
- GM Arman Mikaelyan of Armenia (now Southern California)
- David Gasparyan of Southern California

Each earned \$920 for their endeavors. GM Jianchao Zhou of Massachusetts was upset by Patrick Peijun Liu of Northern California in the first round. GM Tsegmediin Batchuluun of New York blundered in a drawn endgame in his fourth-round encounter with GM Mikaelyan, dropping out of contention for the top prize.

GM Mikaelyan analyzes the endgame here:

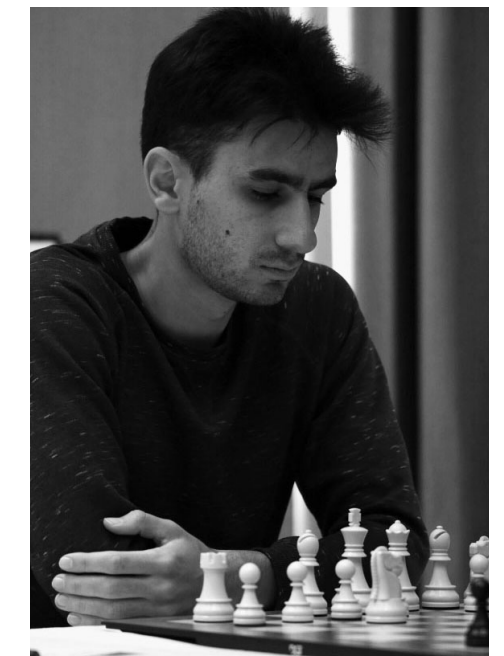
[Event "Western Class"]  
 [Date "2024.03.03"]  
 [Round "4"]  
 [White "Mikaelyan Arman"]  
 [Black "Batchuluun Tsegmed"]  
 [Result "1-0"]  
 [ECO "C01"]  
 [WhiteElo "2508"]  
 [BlackElo "2458"]  
 [Annotator "Arman"]



41... Kf5? (The crucial mistake. However, it was really difficult to find out that this move loses the game. 41... h5! The move doesn't allow me to bring the king to my passed pawn on the c-file. 42. Ke3 Rc5 43. Ke4 Kf6 it is a draw.) 42. Kc3! The king and rook should support the pawn, otherwise black will get some counterattack by pushing his strong passed pawn. (42. Ke3?? doesn't work, because of 43... Kg4 43. Ke4 Rc5!! and the king is cut off) 42... Kg4 43. Kb4 (43. Rd5 Another winning move. I could activate my pieces and get extra tempo by sacrificing a pawn. 43... Kxf4 44. Kd4 Kg4 45. c5 h5 46. Rd6 Rc8 47. c6 h4 48. Kc5 h3 49. Kb6 h2 50. Rd1 Rh8 51. c7 and white wins) 43... h5 44. c5 h4 45. Rd6 Rc7 (45... Rc8 would cause me more issues than the move played in the game. 46. c6 Kxf4 47. Kc5 h3 48. Rd1 h2 49. a4! is the only move that leads to victory. (The most obvious move 49. Kb6? leads to a draw 49... Rb8+!! 50. Ka7 Rc8 provoking the king to come to b7 51. Kb7 Rg8!! 52. c7 Rg1

and only here it is obvious that black promotes to a queen with check. it is a draw.) 49... Rh8 (49... Rg8 50. c7 White is in time.) 50. Rh1 Kg3 51. c7 Kg2 52. Rxh2+ Kxh2 53. Kb6 Kg3 54. Kxa6 Ra8+ 55. Kb7 Rxa4 56. c8=Q) 46. c6 Kxf4 47. Kc5 Rh7 48. Kb6 h3 49. c7 h2 50. c8=Q (50. Rd1 also wins the game) 50...h1=Q 51. Rd4+ Kg3 52. Qg4+ Kf2 53. Rd2+ Ke3 54. Qd4+ Kf3 55. Rf2+ Kg3 56. Qf4+ Very tough game. 1-0

Sultai Chyngyz of Illinois (the new K-8 state champion) was the sole winner of the Expert section which drew 51 participants with a score of 4.5/5 points. The full results of all sections, including classes A to E, can be found at <https://www.sccchess.com/recent.html>.



GM Arman Mikaelyan



# Pacific Southwest Open

July 5-7, 2024

Hilton Irvine/Orange County Airport  
18800 MacArthur Blvd  
Irvine, CA 92612  
949-833-9999

## \$13,000 PRIZE FUND (100% Guaranteed)

8 Rd Swiss, 5 Sections; No 2-day Option, 3 byes allowed!

1. OPEN: \$1,600-\$1,200-\$600-\$300-\$200-\$100; BU2300: \$600-\$300
2. U2200: \$800-400-200-100; plus U2000: \$800-400-200-100
3. U1800: \$800-400-200-100; plus U1600: \$800-400-200-100
4. U1400: \$400-200-100, plus BU1200: \$400-200-100
5. U1000: \$400-200-100

Onsite Registration: 8:30 to 9:30 AM Fri. 7/5, or book online (see below)

Rounds and Time Controls vary each day-please pay close attention!

- Friday, July 5: 10 AM, 1 PM & 4 PM, G/60 w/ 10-second delay
- Saturday, July 6: 10 AM, 2 PM & 7 PM, G/90 w/ 10-second delay
- Sunday, July 7: 9 AM and 3 PM, G/120 w/ 10-second delay

Entry Fee: \$90 Early Bird Rate if received by 4/30/24, or regular \$110 rate from 5/1 to 6/13/24, late rate is \$130 from 6/14-6/30/24. **Rate increases to \$150 if paid on 7/1 or later.**

Only \$90 if U1400 or unrated. Unrated players are not eligible for any cash prizes; there are book or clock prizes for the best unrated in each section. GMs, WGMs, IMs & WIMs play for free (but \$100 deducted from any prize). July Supplement will be used for official ratings, pairings, and prizes. Provisional players (less than 26 games) can win only 50% of any prize -balance goes to remaining prize winners).

### **\$15 charge for refunds and withdrawals**

This event will not be FIDE rated, but the Southern California Open in September will be. \$90 Re-entry fee on day two with three byes is allowed for players U2300.

### **Mail entries to:**

San Diego Chess Club  
PO Box 120162  
San Diego CA 92112

Or go to [www.sccchess.com](http://www.sccchess.com). SCCF membership is required for all SoCal residents (\$20 for adults, or only \$15 for players under 18 years old). Three half pt byes OK if requested at least 1 hour before the round. Last round byes are OK but must be requested before Round 4 and are irrevocable!

**Info:** Chuck Ensey at (858) 432-8006 (please call me if you can't make a round.) Important: \$25 fine imposed for forfeits! Forfeits leave opponents with no one to play with, which will cost you!

**Hotel:** Special rate of only \$169, 1-800-445-8667 if booked by June 12. Book rooms early as they often sell out well before deadline! Email [chucnglo@aol.com](mailto:chucnglo@aol.com) for questions or to get a link to book hotel rooms.

8-Round rated Blitz event on Fri. 7/5 at 7:30 PM, G/5, d2, \$20 entry fee. Reg: to 7:15 PM at event only, no online entry, but you can text me at (858) 432-8006 to enter.

# The Club Roundup

## North County Chess Club



Photo courtesy of North County Chess Club

The North County Chess Club of San Diego meets at 2993 Mac Donald St, Oceanside, CA. The club runs a five-round Swiss format chess tournament and each game is played on Thursday night starting at 7pm. Info at <https://northcountychess.com/>

Recent tournaments have been dominated by the two top rated club players Ala'a-Addin Moussa, and Alex Dyer. Below is the encounter of the tournament that ended February 22.

[Event "NCCC"]  
[Site "Oceanside"]  
[Date "2024.02.01"]  
[Round "2"]  
[White "Dyer, A."]

[Black "Moussa, A."]  
[Result "1/2-1/2"]  
[ECO "B33"]  
[Annotator "Moussa, Ala'a-Addin"]  
[EventDate "2024.02.01"]

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Bg5 a6 8. Na3 b5 9. Nd5 Be7 10. Bxf6 Bxf6 11. c3 O-O 12. Nc2 Bg5 13. h4 Bh6 14. g4 Bf4 15. Qf3 Rb8 16. g5 (16. Be2 Be6 17. Nxf4 exf4 18. a3 a5 19. Qxf4 b4 {Sabirov-Karimov, Uzbek Ch. 1984}) 16... Be6 17. Nxf4 exf4 18. Qxf4 b4 19. cxb4 Nxb4 20. Nxb4 Rxb4 21. Bd3 {21. Bg2 is safer} f5! 22. Qd2 Qb6 23. exf5 Bd5?? ({Missing a forced win} 23... Bxf5! 24. Bxf5 Rxf5 25. O-O-O Qc5+ (25... Rxf2?? 26. Qd5+) 26. Kb1 Rxf2 27. Qd5+ Qxd5 28. Rxd5 Rxb2+ 29. Ka1 Rxa2+ 30. Kb1

Rfb2+ 31. Kc1 Rb4 32. Rh3 Rf4 33. Kb1 Re2 34. Rd1 a5 -+) 24. Rh3 Rxb2 25. Qe3 Qb4+ 26. Kf1 Qg4 27. Qg3 Rxf2+ 28. Kxf2 Qd4+ 29. Qe3 Qxa1 30. Kg3 Qxa2 31. Rh2 Qa4 32. Rf2? (32. Re2 {to prevent Black's next move}) 32... Re8 33. Qf4 Qxf4+?? {misses a second chance to win the game} (33... Qa1! 34. f6 (34. Rf1 Qc3 35. Rd1 Re4 36. Qxd6 Re3+ 37. Kf2 Qd4 -+) 34... Qg1+ 35. Kh3 Be6+-) 34. Kxf4 a5 35. Rd2 Re5? ({Now it is a draw. Black could have tried to get a better end-game with} 35... Bb3! 36. Be4 a4 37. Rxd6 a3 38. Bd5+ Bxd5 39. Rxd5 Ra8 40. Rd1 Ra5 41. Ra1 Kf7) 36. Bc2 Kf8 37. f6 gxf6 38. gxf6 h6 39. Rd4 Rh5 40. Kg4 Re5 41. Kf4 Rh5 42. Kg4 Re5 43. Kf4 1/2-1/2

# The Club Roundup

## San Diego Chess Club The Gambito Open

By Chuck Ensey

There are several reasons for the increased popularity of the Gambito Open. Whether it's data-based or purely speculative, one thing is for sure: attendance is up at nearly every chess club in the country. And the Gambito Open is no exception.

Pandemic stay-at-home orders helped bring new players to the game. Chess.com grew exponentially due to COVID-19 mandates, with more than a two-fold increase in subscribers by April 2020, according to Forbes. "The Queens Gambit," a 2020 Netflix miniseries, is also credited with fueling the chess boom of the last few years.

San Diego's Gambito Open has benefitted significantly from expanded interest in the game. The event attracts approximately twice the number of players it did before the pandemic. At more than 20 years old, the Gambito Open is well-known throughout Southern California and often draws players from as far as the San Francisco Bay Area, Nevada, and Arizona. It is also drawing attendees who have played all over the Los Angeles area, but have never been to Gambitos.

And now for the more speculative theories for the Gambito Open's

upward trend. One reason is the assurance high-rated players have of competing against other high-rated players. This arrangement, officially known as the "Elite" section, began more than two years ago. It consists of the top 12 rated competitors and was set up to prevent large point discrepancies between players, which often occurred due to lower-rated players wanting to play "up." The idea of giving highly ranked players their own section has worked well in practice. It seems many now aspire to be part of the "Elite," but the rule remains that players must rank in the top 12 to participate. Whenever more than 12 Experts or Masters attend, the Elite section is expanded to accommodate them.

It also seems that the more equal distribution of prizes has helped make the Gambito Open a success. Under the current set-up, the four or five sections each receive a more even share of the total prize fund, with only a slightly higher amount going to the top sections. The fees for the event are also quite modest at \$75 for the club and \$75 to \$150 for the TD, depending on the number of players. Considering that the TD puts in 12-hour days at the event and works very hard, this seems to be a relatively low price to pay. TD Jim

Harrell has contributed greatly on almost a weekly basis and receives assistance from me (Chuck Ensey), Ken Green, Sonsea Agonoy and a few other club members as needed.

The Gambito Open Sections consist of: Elite, Open, U1700 and U1300. With enough players, a U1000 section is also included. Prizes are awarded for U2000 and U1800 in the Open; U1700 and U1500 in the third section; and U1000 and U800 prizes in the lower sections. Low-rated players come for a chance to win 3 out of 4 games in a section. Scholastic players from Irina Nizmutdinova's programs who are ready for more challenging play, have also participated. Irina has done an impressive job of attracting new players from San Diego schools to the San Diego Chess Club scholastic program. It includes both online and over-the-board events nearly every week and she has had to limit the number of players in her events as a result of increased demand.

Playing four games in a day is another bonus of the Gambito Open. Learning opening theory and getting to practice endgames are among the most notable benefits. Many players at the event have increased their

*continued on next page*

## SGV Chess Club A Family Affair

By John Wright

If you've played at San Gabriel Valley Chess Club (SGVCC), it's very likely you have played a member of the Daftuar family.

First, there's 10-year-old Rohan, rated 1867, his eight-year old sister Leya, rated 1357, and also dad Sum-it, who only started playing last June and has a respectable 1200 rating.



Photos courtesy of SGVCC

### ...SDCC Gambitos continued

rating dramatically by playing at the SDCC. Omar Orduno won a trophy for "Gambito Player of the Year in 2023." His rating went from U1000 to over 1800! Many newly minted Masters earned their stripes at the Gambito. Many of the International Masters that came up through San



Mom Lilyn is part of the team too, helping with much needed transportation and sometimes getting the kids back home early when dad has a long game.

It has become quite common to look at the pairings chart and see that all three won their games on a given night. In fact, at the Mount Lowe Swiss in October of 2023, this trio all won prize money. And don't look now, but little brother Ojas has just started playing rated events. This ability for everyone in a family

to engage in the same activity is truly one of the unique aspects of chess. Unlike other sports or activities, age, gender, or size matter not. You don't have to be the fastest or the strongest, just play good chess moves!

At SGVCC we are pleased to have quite a few chess playing families. Plus, we discount our club membership dues by offering a family membership plan. So as they say, if you're looking for a night out the whole family can enjoy, SGVCC is your place!

Diego also received their start by playing at the Gambito. IM Cyrus Lakdawala (now retired) played for the first 20 years of the Gambito and IM Dionisio Aldama, and occasionally Alex Costello, Ming Lu, and Kirk Ghazarian attend.

If you have not played at the Gambito Open yet, we encourage you to make the effort to join in. In addition to the many reasons just listed for its success, you are sure to meet new friends and have a great time.

*...Club Roundup continued on pg. 25*

# Junior-Senior Open

By Chuck Ensey

Missing since 2018, the Junior-Senior Open proved it was due for a comeback.

The event took place at the San Diego Chess Club on Easter weekend. It drew 96 players despite minimal publicity and preparations made within a relatively short period.

in Moussa, and Orange County Expert Brian Desouza, each received \$333.

The \$400 prize for BU2000 went to long-time SDCC club member Alejandrino Baluran, who scored 4 points, including an upset of the IM in the last round.



Photo courtesy of SDCC

The open included four sections:

- Senior Open for 50+ years
- Senior Reserve (U1800)
- Junior Open
- Junior Reserve (U1800).

There were six rounds of G/90 with five-second delay. The open included \$8,600 in guaranteed prizes. The winners can be found on the SDCC website: ([www.sandiegochessclub.org](http://www.sandiegochessclub.org)).

The Senior Open Section saw a three-way tie for first and second place/BU2200 between players with 4.5 points. The players, IM Dionisio Aldama, SCCF President Ala'a-Add-

In the Senior Reserve Section, SDCC player Pejman Sagart won his first five games in a row, but lost in the last round to SDCC President Chuck Ensey. Pejman won \$400 for first place. Ensey, Anthony Su, James DuBois, and Oren Porat tied for second and third place. Danik Matirosoyan of San Diego won BU1600 for \$400.

In the Junior Open, Ashwin Dam-araju of Irvine won \$400 for first place with 5 points. Glenn Zhang of Riverside also scored five points to win \$400 for BU2200. Alan Peng of Upland scored 4.5 points to win second place for \$200. Arjun Dam-

araju (4.5) also won \$200 for second place for U2200. Forest Sherwood of Manhattan Beach won \$400 for BU2000.

In the Junior Reserve, Khai West of Menifee won \$400 for first place with an impressive 5.5 point score. Yishuo Sun of Chino Hills won second place for \$200 with 5 points. Max Chan, also from Chino Hills, tied with two players from San Diego, Lucas Ding and Sachin Chavatapalli, for \$333 each - a pooled prize of first/second U1600/BU1400 and all scoring 4 points.

Jim Harrell directed with assistance from Irina Nizmutdinova, who utilized the "Caissa" program to keep players and spectators informed of pairings and standings throughout the tournament.

IM Aldama blundered to a mate in two in the last round.

Alejandrino Baluran (1900)--IM Dionisio Aldama (2448), Junior Senior Open Rd 6 3/31/2024

1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. Bc4 Nb6 4. Bb3 d6 5. Qf3 e6 6. exd6 Bxd6 7. d4 Nc6 8. c3 O-O 9. Ne2 e5 10. d5 Na5 11. Nd2 f5 12. c4 Bd7 13. Qc3 Nxb3 14. axb3 c6 15. dxc6 Bxc6 16. Nf3 f4 17. Bd2 e4 18. Nfd4 e3 19. fxe3 Qh4+ 20. Kd1 Bxg2 21. Rg1 Qxh2 22. Ne6 Rf7 23. exf4 Re8 24. f5 Nd7 25. Qd4 Be5 26. Qg4 Bh3 27. Qh5 Nf6?? 28. Qxf7+ Kxf7 29. Rxf7# 1-0

# Coach Q Interviews GM JJ

Dylan Quercia (Coach Q): I'm here with a new Southern California Grandmaster. Let's have you introduce yourself.

GM Cemil Can Ali Marandi (GM JJ): Yeah, sounds good. My name is Cemil Can and my last name is Ali Marandi and most people call me "GM JJ" because, essentially, the "CS" sound like "JS" in Turkish, and I go by "GM JJ" to make it simple.

But, if you want to find my games online in your mega database or any sort of software, you would just type in my last name.

Coach Q: Alright, thanks a lot GM JJ. I appreciate that. And so you are a Grandmaster, right?

GM JJ: That's correct. I am currently 26 years old, but I became a Grandmaster when I was 19, so that was in 2017.

Coach Q: And you just moved to Southern California, is that correct?

GM JJ: I actually moved in September of 2022, the beginning of the fall of the UCSD academic calendar, to begin my PhD degree in bioinformatics. So it's been a year and a half at this point.

Coach Q: How are you enjoying Southern California?

GM JJ: It's fantastic. Great weather and very nice atmosphere. Very happy.

Coach Q: Excellent. Have you been able to play any events?

GM JJ: No tournaments at the moment, but I have visited the San Diego Chess Club and it's a great place, very nice atmosphere. I did feel very welcomed and I saw that there is a lot of chess potential in terms of youth, scholastic level and even more uprising, like stars, coming up. So it's a very nice

place. I did visit the Gambitos and the Scholastic events over the weekend a couple of times and yeah, had a very pleasant experience.

Coach Q: Excellent. And do you have any students playing in those events?

GM JJ: Yeah, I have some students from those tournaments, met a couple of talented young kids and they are doing very well. I'm actually very proud of them. I don't want to disclose any names, but hopefully their success will make the noise itself.

Coach Q: Excellent. Let's start first, though, with what you're doing... So tell everybody about what you are studying and why you're studying it.

GM JJ: So I am currently doing my PhD in bioinformatics and without giving too much away and confusing the audience, I'm doing my work on single-cell Hi-C data, let's put it that way. It will be a lot of jargon, but essentially, I'm working on some biological data using computer software like Python or Bash or R. That's kind of the general summary.

The reason I'm interested in this field is I did my undergrad and my master's degree in St. Louis University. I actually doubled majored in computer engineering and computer science for my undergrad and did my master's in artificial intelligence. And the reason I'm explaining all of this is I have a high computational background, so I wanted to take my computational skills into a more real-world applicable field like biology since the biotech industry is actually exploding at the moment. And



Photo courtesy of Lennart Ootes

GM JJ at FIDE 44th Chess Olympiad 2022-Round 5.

as you know, San Diego is very rich in biotech firms. For example, Illumina is one of the top firms in this area and there are a lot more in the industry. So that's why I'm here and trying to use the skills I already have and learning more at the same time to the field of bioinformatics.

Coach Q: Well, that's quite fascinating. Are you dealing with really large data sets?

GM JJ: Yes. The data sets are actually huge. Currently the one I'm working with has 140,000 cells and each cell is an individual data set by its own, which could have up to 500,000 rows and up to thousands of columns. So if you do the math, the math is just huge...

Coach Q: How do you think chess has impacted your ability to deal with that large amount of data?

GM JJ: Yeah, so chess has contributed a lot; I've been playing chess since I was seven... We kind of have to think about all sorts of possibilities, whether they're good or not, sort of edge cases and all that. And when you're analyzing a giant data [set], you sort of can't just do a simple operation on it and then miss an edge case and be like, oh, I forgot this...

And if you think about it, if the data is huge, there will be at least some occurrences of edge cases in some parts of the data. So we need to know how to filter the data, get the correct information, get the wrong information. There's always some noise in the data because it is big data. You kind of have to think a little bit about everything in general before you can do something and connecting that to chess before you make a move, you do have to think about what your opponent wants to do,

what are your main ideas? Let's say in the research field, you need to know what other people have already done. In chess, you also have to know what people have played. You don't need to reinvent an opening out of nowhere if you just know what has already been played. So there's a lot of similarities in the field.

Coach Q: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about your time in St. Louis because that's quite interesting.

GM JJ: It was fantastic. I still have connections with the St. Louis, the city of St. Louis, SLU the school, and the St. Louis chess club as well. So it was fantastic being there. I moved to St. Louis in August of 2016, did my undergrad and master's. I spent a very nice six years, approximately--a little less. So it was fantastic. Obtained my degrees, learned a lot, big chess scene, attended many chess tournaments, was able to coach there a few times. And the GM in residence program that they do every single year for three weeks per GM, so I was able to attend that one.

Had the honor of meeting top players in the world like Fabiano Caruana. I've seen Gary Kasparov over there. Many legendary names. So every time I'm in St. Louis I feel very happy, but I'm also very happy being here. So it is a win-win, whether I'm here or there. It's always good to have connections and it's a wonderful place.

Coach Q: And were you a Grandmaster before you came to the United States, or did you get your norms here?

GM JJ: I was actually an International Master with close to 2500 FIDE rating. I had one GM norm. I think I was struggling a bit in terms of getting my last two norms, but as soon as I started

going to SLU, all my teammates apart from myself were Grandmasters and hanging out with them, spending more time with them, got my confidence higher and they actually supported me by saying, you already should become a Grandmaster at this point. You have the knowledge. And that gave me that confidence boost to get my title the very next summer after my freshman year. So before I started my sophomore year, I was already officially a Grandmaster.

Coach Q: Wow. And why was confidence necessary for you to make the next step?

GM JJ: I think you need to spend more time with people better than you, rather than you being the best in a certain area. So I was certainly one of the most talented players in my town in Ankara, but it wasn't like I was spending every day with let's say three to four Grandmasters and my roommate was a Grandmaster. So we spent time together, we, let's say looked at chess, we played chess, we just generally speaking, just spent time together. Apart from chess too, just doing academics and just being around the people in that level was like, okay, I can actually do this. And just gave me that small confidence boost that I needed to just get my norms. And that very summer, I think I increased around 50 rating points, getting to my peak rating at that time and getting my GM title, which was a very fast improvement compared to what I had before.

Coach Q: I find your experience quite interesting too because you told me you played in the Istanbul Olympiad in 2012 and the 2022 Chennai Olympiad. Give us a little bit of background about those two prestigious events.

GM JJ: So I had the honor of representing Turkey in two Olympiads. The first one, I was actually 14 and the fact that it was in Istanbul allowed Turkey to play with multiple teams. I wasn't representing the main team. Of course at the time I was representing the futures team, let's put it that way, where I had a couple of my other friends who are very strong Grandmasters at the moment and the talents of that era were basically in a team. So it was a very fantastic atmosphere because I did see a lot of the players that I've never seen in my life before. That was actually the first time I saw Gary Kasparov in the playing hall and many other legends were in the playing hall at the same time. And in 2022 in Chennai, I was representing the main team... [The] Olympiad is always a very nice event playing as a team, representing the country, it always makes me proud. So that was great atmosphere, good result. Overall if we won the last two matches, we were even potentially in top three. So you can imagine how close we were, but we did lose to the United States and then to Poland back-to-back in the last two rounds, which was unfortunate. But we did our best as a team, hopefully better in the upcoming Olympiad.

Coach Q: And you also mentioned a really unique achievement that you were able to win the European Youth Championship five times, once in every category?

GM JJ: Yeah, for sure. That, apart from becoming a grandmaster, is definitely the biggest achievement in terms of my chess career because that is a record still holding in the European continent. And I did win every category under 10, under 12, under 14, under 16 and

under 18. And I'm clearly stating all of these out to give inspiration to the younger generation that I was able to win continental championship.

It is definitely my biggest achievement and representing my country with such a success that it's a record never broken. It might be broken one day, but to this day no one has repeated it.

Coach Q: Yeah, that's absolutely incredible. I think that achievement gives us a good tie into the next subject I want to talk to you about, which is your coaching. Can you tell us how you prepare yourself and then how you prepare a student and the similarities.

GM JJ: Yeah, so my motto actually on my website says, champions raise champions. So the idea is, I basically know exactly what they're going through. I can relate to the parents, I can relate to the players, and I can also relate to the coaching end. I didn't achieve any of the success that I did because it was my own individual hard work. Without my family, I couldn't have achieved any of the things I did. They were the ones who supported me... These sacrifices just added up.

Coach Q: Great. And are you actively taking students?

GM JJ: Yeah, I do have room for some students. Some are actually in person because a lot of the locals actually prefer in person. I did prefer in person myself. Of course growing up technology wasn't as advanced anyway, so we were still doing lessons by Skype, but it wasn't as popular back then. So I had in-person coaching for many years until I started working with foreigner coaches. So that was on Skype. But I do teach both online and

in person in San Diego.

Coach Q: How can parents and students get in contact with you if they want to bring you on as coach?

GM JJ: That's a great question. They can go to my website, which is my first name, cemilcan.com. And there they can find my email address and they can shoot me an email and always ask me about stuff. Thank you for having me.

[Event "2022 Turkish League"]  
[Date "2022.08.26"]  
[Round "11"]  
[White "Ali Marandi, Cemil Can"]  
[Black "Ozkan, Taha"]  
[Result "1-0"]  
[ECO "C01"]  
[WhiteElo "2561"]  
[BlackElo "2318"]

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Bd3 dxe4 4. Bxe4 Nf6 5. Bf3 c5 6. Ne2 Nc6 7. Be3 cxd4 (7... Qb6 8. Nbc3 Qxb2 9. O-O cxd4 10. Rb1 Qa3 11. Nb5) 8. Nxd4 Ne5 9. Nc3 a6 10. Qe2 Nxf3+ 11. Nxf3 Be7 (11... b5 12. Bd4 Bb7 13. O-O-O Qc7 14. Be5 Qc5) 12. Bd4 O-O 13. O-O-O Qa5 14. Ne5 Rd8 15. Kb1 Nd7 16. Nc4 Qc7 17. Nd5 exd5 18. Qxe7 dxc4 19. Be5 Qb6 20. Rd6 Qa5 21. Rd5 Qb6 (21... b5 22. Bxg7 Kxg7 23. Rg5+ Kh8 24. Qxf7) 22. Bd4 Qc7 23. Bxg7 Kxg7 24. Rg5+ Kh6 25. Qxf7 Kxg5 26. h4+ Kh6 27. g4 Rg8 28. g5+ Rxg5 29. hxg5+ Kxg5 30. Rh5+ Kg4 31. Qf5# 1-0

# State Open Best Game Winners

By IM Jack Peters

DAVID GASPARYAN-TREMIL  
ANDERSON  
44TH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
OPEN, ROUND 3  
SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 c5 3. e3 cxd4 4. exd4 d6?! 5. Bd3 e5?! 6. dxe5 dxe5 7. 0-0  
White's faster development gives him the advantage.  
7...Bd6 8. Re1 Nc6 9. Nc3 0-0 10. Bg5 Bg4 11. Bxf6! gxf6

Black must avoid 11... Qxf6?? because of 12. Ne4 Qh6 13. Nxd6, when 13...Qxd6? loses the Queen to 14. Bxh7+.

12. h3 Bh5 13. Qd2 Bg6 14. Bxg6??

White's only serious mistake. Now Black could escape by 14... fxc6! 15. Rad1 Bb4. White should have played 14. Rad1 Bb4 15. Qh6 +-.

14...hxc6?? 15. Rad1 Nd4

Yielding a pawn, but alternatives lose to 16. Qh6.

16. Nxd4 exd4 17. Qxd4 Be5 18. Qh4 Qa5

Black holds out longer with 18...Qc8 19. Nd5 Kg7 20. c3 Qc6.

19. Nd5! Kg7

White refutes 19...Bxb2 neatly by 20. Ne7+ Kg7 21. Nxc6!, anticipating 21...Kxc6 22. Re4 +- and 21...fxg6 22. Rd7+ Rf7 23. Rxf7+ Kxf7 24. Qh7+ Kf8 25. Re7 +-.

Or, if 19...Rad8 20. c4 Qxa2 21. Qh6, White's threat of 22. Rxe5 forces Black to give up the exchange by 21...Rxd5 22. cxd5 +-.

20. Rxe5! fxe5 21. Qf6+ Kh6

After 21...Kh7 22. Qxe5 Kh6 23. Rd4, Black cannot save both

his King and Queen.

If 21...Kg8, then 22. Ne7+ Kh7 23. Nxc6! leads to the game.  
22. Ne7

Threatening 23. Nf5+, and 22...e4 23. Rd5 doesn't help Black.  
22...Kh7 23. Nxc6! Rfd8

As 23...fxg6 allows 24. Rd7+ Kh6 25. Qh4#.

24. Qxf7+ Kh6 25. Rxd8 Qxd8 26. Ne7 Qb6

Another finish is 26...Qd1+ 27. Kh2 Qxc2 28. h4, setting up 29. Nf5+.

27. Nf5+ Kg5 28. h4+ Kg4 29. Ne3+ Kxh4 30. Qf5, Black Resigns.

ASHWIN DAMARAJU-JOSE  
MARCAL  
44TH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
OPEN U2200, ROUND SIX  
SEPTEMBER 4, 2023

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nd4 4. Nf3 Nxb5

Playable, but Black will fall behind in development. More popular are 4...a6 and 4...e6.

5. Nxb5 a6 6. Nc3 g6?

Too slow. It's doubtful if White can exploit his great lead in development after 6...e6 7. d4 cxd4 8. Qxd4 b5 9. 0-0 Bb7 10. Re1 Nf6.

7. d4 Bg7

No better is 7...cxd4 8. Qxd4 Nf6 9. e5 Nh5 10. Nd5 +-.

8. dxc5 Qa5 9. Bd2 Qxc5 10. Nd5! Bxb2?

This should lose quickly. However, even the prudent 10...Nf6 11. Be3 Qc6 fails. White would harass Black's Queen by 12. Ne5! Qd6

13. Nc4 Qc6 14. Na5 Qa4 (or 14... Qd6 15. Bf4 e5 16. Nc4 Qc5 17. Bxe5 +-)  
15. Nc7+ Kf8 16. Nxa8 Qxa5+ 17. c3 d6 18. Nb6 +-, retaining Rook for Bishop.

11. Rb1 Bg7 12. 0-0

Deadliest is 12. Be3 Qa5+ (or 12...Qd6 13. Bb6 +-)  
13. Qd2 Qxd2+ 14. Nxd2, soon winning a piece. For example, 14...Rb8 15. Ba7 Be5 loses to 16. Nc4 Ra8 17. Nxe5 Rxa7 18. Nb6.

12...b5 13. Be3 Qd6 14. e5 Qc6

If 14...Bxe5 15. Nxe5 Qxe5 16. Bf4 Qf5, White traps the Queen by 17. g4! Qe4 18. Rb4.

15. c4! Bb7

Avoiding another Queen trap, 15...bxc4? 16. Rb6.

16. Nd4?

Not the most persuasive. Black's position will collapse after 16. Qb3 Rd8 17. Rfc1, intending a2-a4.

16...Qxc4 17. Nb6 Qxa2?

To keep the game going, Black must resort to 17...Qc7 18. Nxa8 Bxa8. Stockfish suggests 19. Qe2 Qxe5 19. Nxb5!, when 19...f5 continues to resist.

18. Nxa8 Bxa8 19. Qc1 Kd8

Black can suffer a little longer with 19...Qa5 20. Qc8+ Qd8 21. Rfc1 +-.

20. Nxb5

Threatening 21. Bb6+ Ke8 22. Qc8#.

20...Bc6 21. Na7 Bxe5

It's mate after 21...Qd5 22. Rb8+ Kc7 23. Rc8+ Kb7 24. Qb1+ Bb5 25. Nxb5 axb5 26. Rfc1.

22. Nxc6+ dxc6 23. Qxc6 e6 24. Rb7, Black Resigns.

continued on back cover

...Club Roundup continued from pg. 19

## Chess Palace

By Charlene Ong

The ChessPalace chess club was established in 1990 and is located at 5246 Lampson Avenue, Garden Grove, CA. The club runs regular monthly and weekly tournaments for children and adults, hosts casual play nights, and sells chess books, boards, and gifts. Learn more at [www.chesspalace.com](http://www.chesspalace.com).

The club's most recent Scholastic Tournament, which was held outdoors, was hosted on March 31. Despite rainy conditions, tournament goers and parents had a great time. Children took their time with their games, thinking carefully and strategically against their oppo-

nents, and the top five finishers in each section were awarded trophies. ChessPalace is excited to announce the following tournament's results:

The top two sections were combined and the winners for the Open and Under 1100 sections are:

*Open Section:* Tied for 1st place with 4 points: Garik Yegoryan, Ryder Margalit, and

Arnav Thoppai; 4th place: Isaac Lien (3 pts); 5th place: Owen Kozinski (2 pts)

*U1100 Section:* 1st place: Rafael Sisti (3 pts); Tied for 2nd place: Jonty Shapiro, Mihir

Pillai, and Rishita Bhatia (2 pts); 5th place: Aditi Ganesh (1.5 pts)

Under 800 and Under 400 Sections:

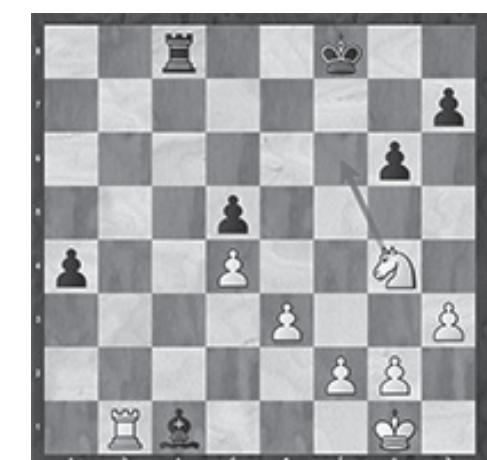
*U800 Section:* 1st place: Warren Chang (4 pts); 2nd place: Ettan Liss (3.5 pts); tied for 3rd Place: Nicolas Penagos, Abby Satorius, Shawn Dwire, and Aarav Bhatia (3 pts each)

*U400 Section:* 1st place: Leonardo Lien (7 pts); 2nd place: Tamiliniyan Padmanaban (5 pts); 3rd place: Mher Satchyan (4 pts); 4th place: Milla Ling (3 pts); 5th place: Kria Kalyana

...Junior-Senior Open continued from pg. 20

[Event "Senior Open"]  
[Site "SDCC"]  
[Date "2024.03.31"]  
[Round "4"]  
[White "Moussa, A."]  
[Black "Aldama, D."]  
[Result "0-1"]  
[ECO "E56"]

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c5 4. e3 Nf6 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. Bd3 a6 7. cxd5 exd5 8. h3  
Bd6 9. O-O O-O 10. dxc5 Bxc5 11. Ne2 Re8 12. a3 a5 13. Ned4 Ne4 14. Qc2 Qb6 15.



Nb3 Bf8 16. Nbd4 Bd7 17. Bd2 Rac8 18. Bc3 Nxc3 19. bxc3 g6 20. Rfb1

Nxd4 21. cxd4 Rxc2 22. Rxb6 Rc3 23. Bb5 Bxb5 24. Rxb5 a4 25. Rxb7 Ra8 26. Ne5 Bxa3 27. Nxf7 Rc1+ 28. Rxc1 Bxc1 29. Nh6+ Kf8 30. Rb1 Rc8 31. Ng4?? (31. Rb7! Ra8 32. Rb1 Ba3 33. Ng4 should be enough to draw) 31... a3 32. Rb7 Ra8 33. Nf6 Ra6 34. Nd7+ Ke8 35. Nc5 a2 36. Nb3 Bb2 37. g4 Ra3 38. Rb8+ Ke7 39. Rb7+ Kd8 0-1



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*...State Open games continued from page 24*

David Gasparyan – Vincent Qin  
44th Southern California Open,  
Round Six  
September 2, 2023

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4  
Nc6 5. Nc3 Qc7 6. Be3 a6 7. Qf3

A fashionable treatment of  
the Taimanov Sicilian.

7...Nf6 8. 0-0-0 Ne5 9. Qg3 b5 10. f4  
Neg4 11. e5?!

Theory concentrates on 11.  
Bg1 h5 12. e5 b4 13. Na4 Nd5.

11...Nxe3 12. Qxe3 b4! 13. exf6  
bxc3 14. f5

The first new move. It should  
not alter the assessment that Black  
has a small advantage.

14...cxb2??

The correct 14...gxf6 15.  
fxe6 dxe6 lets Black meet 16. Be2  
by 16...Rb8 17. b3 e5. Also 16. Kb1  
Rb8 17. b3 Be7 18. Rd3 e5! 19. Nf3  
Bb4 favors Black.

15. Kb1

Just like the books say – hide  
your King behind a wall of three  
pawns.

15...gxf6 16. fxe6 dxe6 17. Be2??

White gets a relentless at-  
tack from the forcing 17. Qf3! Rb8  
18. Qxf6 Rg8 19. Nc6! Be7 20. Nxe7  
Qxe7 21. Qe5 +-.  
17...Be7?

Black could regain the ad-  
vantage by 17...Rb8 18. Rd3 e5.

18. Bf3 Bb7??

Fatal. To preserve equality, Black

must find the complicated line 18...  
Rb8 19. Bc6+ Bxd7 20. Bxd7+ Qxd7  
21. Nf5 Qb5 22. Ng7+ Kf8 23. Qh6  
Kg8 24. Rd7! Qg5! 25. Qxg5 fxe5 26.  
Nxe6 Rb6!, with simplification to a  
drawn endgame.

19. Nxe6! fxe6 20. Bh5+ Kf8 21.  
Qxe6 Kg7

Against 21...Bc5, both 22.  
Rd7 and 22. Qxf6+ Kg8 23. Rhf1  
wrap it up.

22. Rd7 Qe5 23. Rxe7+ Kh6 24.  
Qxf7!

Energetic play leads to a  
quick knockout.

24...Qg5 25. h4 Qxg2 26. Qxf6+  
Kxh5 27. Re5+ Kg4 28. Rg5#.