

A Child Shall Lead Them at the CalChess Scholastics

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By NM Michael Aigner

A larger story will follow in the next week.

Pins, skewers, forks and smothered mates were featured at the 32nd Annual CalChess State Scholastic Championships held on April 28-29 at the San Mateo County Expo Center. A total of over 1100 players and an even larger number of parents, family members, coaches, directors and volunteers descended on the fairgrounds next to the Bay Meadows race track to play the royal game. Considering the size of the event, the tournament ran smoothly with most of the rounds beginning within minutes of the scheduled time. The winners in each of 11 sections ranging from Kindergarten to the incredibly difficult High School Varsity were awarded trophies with the title of State Champion.

High School State Champion Daniel Naroditsky.

The High School Varsity section made history for California and perhaps for the entire nation. In a field of two teenage masters and six experts, a fifth grader took the top honors at 5.5 out of 6. Of course, Daniel Naroditsky, ranked #1 in the nation for age 11, is already experienced to being first in chess. On the second day of the tournament, he faced three of the five players tied for second place: reigning National High School Champion Michael Zhong, Saratoga High School captain David Chock and finally National Master Sam Shankland. Perhaps this was Daniel's first of maybe many more High School state championship trophies.

In fact, Daniel is so young that he is ineligible to play in the national Denker Invitational for High School state champions. That leaves the five players tied for second to compete in a playoff yet to be scheduled: NM Sam Shankland, David Chock, NM Nicolas Yap, Adarsh Konda and Michael Zhong.

Congratulations to the following State Champions for 2007!

Kindergarten

Winner = Tanuj Vasudeva

Primary Novice (U500 and unrated)

Winners = Archana Gopalakrishnan, Alexander Zeng, Akhil Ravoori, Will Baumbacher, Christopher Nip and William Weber

Team = Heather Elementary School

Primary Varsity

Winners = Jessica Zhu, Daniel Ho, David Paravyan, Neel Apte and Rohan Desikan

Team = Weibel Elementary School

Elementary Novice (U600 and unrated)

Winners = Jasper Deng, Kevin M. Tang, Matthew Luong, Samuel Saldinger and Peseth Tep

Team = Cherrywood Elementary School

Elementary Junior Varsity (U900)

Winner = Anthony Chan

Team = Weibel Elementary School

Elementary Grades 4 & 5 Varsity

Winner = Steven Hao

Team = Mission San Jose Elementary School

Elementary School Varsity

Winner = Nicholas Nip

Team = Mission San Jose Elementary School

Junior High School Junior Varsity (U900)

Winner = Jason Park

Team = Horner Middle School

Junior High School Varsity

Winner = Steven Zierk

Team = Redwood Middle School and Hopkins Junior High School

High School Junior Varsity (U1000)

Winner = ?

Team = ?

High School Varsity

Winner = Daniel Naroditsky

Team = Saratoga High School

For complete tournament results, please visit the Stockton chess website run by Jacob Green. The final crosstables for JHS Varsity and both High School sections should be up by Monday evening.

<http://www.stocktonchess.com/CalChessScholastics2007/calchessscholastics07.htm>

Photos will be available on various Northern California chess websites by Monday night or Tuesday. Please check out the following for literally hundreds of photos of smiling children.

<http://www.chessdryad.com> (Mark Shelton and Richard Shorman)

<http://www.calnorthyouthchess.org/photographs.html> (Alan Kirshner)

<http://www.calchess.org/modules.php?name=coppermine&cat=10017> (Michael Aigner)

This tournament is not possible with a large number of directors and volunteers to set up, run the pairings, control the kids, answer questions from the parents, handle disputes, award the trophies and clean up. Many of these volunteers literally worked 14 hour days on Saturday and Sunday, some already coming to set up on Friday. The biggest volunteer was chief organizer Dr. Alan Kirshner, who put in hundreds of hours before and during the tournament, trying to ensure that everything ran smoothly. He couldn't do it all by himself, but he certainly did more than anyone could expect from a single individual.

The tournament directors worked hard as well, guiding those nearly 1200 children as they played over 3000 games over the course of two days. The chief TD of the tournament was John McCumiskey and his top assistant was Richard Koepcke. The final thank you goes to the parents and families of the players, who shared the joy of victory and agony of defeat with their children over the weekend.



Junior High Champion Steven Zierk (left) with High School Champion Daniel Naroditsky.



Elementary School Champion Nicholas Nip.



High School Team Champion Saratoga H.S. (back row) with Junior High Team Champion Redwood M.S.



Are these kids having fun or what? Bughouse tournament winners.