

Two National Champs! Kyle Shin and Arun Khemani Win in Florida!

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Veni! Vici! Lest anyone doubt the impact of the Bay Area scholastic chess community at the national scene, this weekend proved that our kids are prepared to challenge the best of the country--and for that matter, the world. Only 11 local players and their parents flew to **Lake Buena Vista, Florida** for the **National K-12 Championships**, yet three of them remained in contention for top honors on the last day. Amazingly, 7 out of 11 took home a trophy! And in spite of difficult competition, two stars won 1st place trophies!

Congratulations to National Champions Kyle Shin (clear first in 5th grade) and Arun Khemani (top tiebreaks in Kindergarten).

As the top seed in 5th grade, **Kyle Shin** (1943) knew that he would be tested by each and every opponent. He survived a tough game in round 2 against an underrated young Russian immigrant and escaped a losing position in round 6 with a perpetual check. The final round took the full three hours. As Capablanca famously said: "a good player is always lucky." The difference between Kyle and the three other A players in his grade was the ability to take care of business against low rated opponents. In fact, Kyle never faced his nearest competitors because all of those strong players lost to 1600s, and in one case, a 1400. Good job Kyle for sticking to the game plan!

On the other hand, **Arun Khemani** (1055) faced a different challenge after losing to an unrated in the very first round. Salman Azhar of BayAreaChess.com summed it up best by observing that the "sign of a champion is what he does after he loses rather than after he wins. Arun bounced back from [the] first round loss with six wins to bring Bay Area a National Championship!" In the last round, Arun defeated the top seed, Awonder Liang from Wisconsin, in a battle between two 1000+ rated 5 year olds. He's still young, yet there's no doubt that Arun's future in chess is bright! Kudos also to all-star coach Ted Castro!

Click here for the [trophy distribution](#) and the [USCF rating report](#).

- Kindergarten: **Arun Khemani** 6.0 - 1st place!!!
- Kindergarten: **Lindsey Canessa** 4.0 - honorable mention
- 1st Grade: **Rayan Taghizadeh** 5.0 - honorable mention
- 2nd Grade: **John Canessa** 5.0 - 12th place
- 3rd Grade: **Cameron Wheeler** 5.5 - 9th place
- 3rd Grade: **Alvin Kong** 5.0 - honorable mention
- 5th Grade: **Kyle Shin** 6.5 - 1st place!!!

Kudos to all of the prize winners! **Cameron Wheeler** stood tall against the big boys in 3rd grade, drawing with one 1800 before succumbing to another. Siblings **John and Lindsey Canessa** both earned well deserved trophies. Lindsey even doubled her 150 rating, now up to 338.



5th Grade champion Kyle Shin.



Kindergarten champion Arun Khemani



The trophies at Nationals are BIG!