

Irvington High Captures NorCal Chess League Varsity Title

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by Aditya Kumar

What do you think most teenagers do on the weekend? Procrastinate on homework? Eat junk food 24/7? While this might be true for some adolescents, the nine high school teams who competed in the Northern California High School Chess Championship would have to think otherwise. For eleven weeks, high schools from around the Bay Area, in both Varsity and Junior Varsity Chess teams, competed for the title of Northern California High School Champion. The teams that participated in this competition included American HS, Campolindo, Rio Americano, Northgate, Irvington, Dougherty Valley, Saratoga, Monte Vista & Monta Vista. Typical high school days are packed with strenuous academic activities; playing chess is an added dimension to an already hectic schedule. To quote organizer Sydney Liu "The league was an opportunity for high school students across Northern California to play chess in a fun, and yet competitive manner. The advantage of playing online is that it doesn't require commuting and doesn't take up too much time."

Organizer Sydney Liu conducted this tournament on freechess.org, a free chess server; the tournament was unique because it was solely run by students, rather than adults. The league operated on a round robin system for the first nine matches, followed by an elimination bracket for the top four teams of the round robin. Every Sunday at 2:00 pm, all of the players would check their pairings on the league website, and promptly start their games; although there were occasional forfeits and tardies, the league was extremely well organized given that this was the inaugural year of the tournament.



The final match of the league featured an intense mental brawl between Irvington High School and Monta Vista High School. Both teams had proven to be equally matched in their past match, but Irvington came out on top with a perfect 5-0 score in Varsity section. However, Monta Vista didn't go home empty-handed – they competed against Rio Americano in the final match of the Junior Varsity section and won first place Junior Varsity team.



The Irvington team, led by yours truly, consists of NM Rohan Agarwal, Kevin Hui, Eric Zhang, Brandon Lam, Ankur Gupta and Eswar Dhinakaran. The Monta Vista team, led by Harsha Nukala, consists of Sanath Mullapudi, Sukumar Kalvapudi, Jacob Xu, Richard Jiang, James Zhang, and Siddarth Manoj. Kudos to Sydney Liu for organizing this tournament ; I am sure that the league will become a tradition for the Norcal High School chess community for years to come.

More details on the league can be found at <http://ncachessleague.weebly.com/>