

1st NorCal House of Chess Invitational

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by Joyce Laforsteza

The 1st NorCal House of Chess Invitational in Fremont proved to be a successful event. There were a few upsets along the way, but the top-seeded players still came out the



victors. After a nine-game round-robin, IM **Enrico Sevillano** scored 7.5 to win clear first, while two other IMs, **Ricardo De Guzman** and **Ray Kaufman**, placed 2nd-3rd with 6 points. The tournament included 3 IMs, 3 FMs, 1 WFM and 2 National Masters to satisfy the Category III (2307 average FIDE Rating).



The youngest two participants proved they could play against the big guns: 22-yr old WFM **Uyanga Byambaa** and 14-yr. old whiz kid (NM) **Yian Liou**. Both came close to earning their first norms (WIM and IM). IM-elect **Ronald Cusi** came in 4th place (5.5 points), without losing a game. Ronald has already completed three of his IM norms, and merely needs to reach 2400 FIDE rating to officially become an IM. They will most likely try their chances again in the next NorCal House of Chess Invitational on May 12, 13, 18, 19 and 20.

On the same weekend, NorCal House of Chess conducted its 1st FIDE Qualifier event, to give players the chance to earn a much-coveted seat in the Invitational. 20 players competed in this prestigious event, mostly the top kids from Northern California. **Daniel Liu** earned the seat by scoring 3.5 points. He also became a National Master by reaching the 2200-mark. He actually tied with World-Youth-veteran **Cameron Wheeler**, but had better tie-breaks. Cameron, together with fellow chess punk **Vignesh Panchanatham** (who beat top-seeded NM **Ryan Porter**), both earned seats in the next FIDE Qualifier on May 19-20.

NorCal House of Chess continues its tradition of organizing the most elite chess tournaments in Northern California, for both adults and scholastics. This type of tournament has attracted many players from other countries and states, primarily because of chief organizer **Ted Castro's** (famous coach and chief organizer) hospitality—warm accommodation, food, quality of tournament (every round starts on time) and great players. It's like one big party; everyone's having fun (before and after their games) while playing serious, quality games on the board. Despite having no sponsors (other than Weibel Chess, which provided nice chess pieces and clocks), parents/chess lovers come and visit, bring food/drinks and volunteer to make these events a successful one. Wei Liu, coach and father of Daniel Liu, commented that "NorCal House of Chess has raised chess in the Bay Area to a higher level."

Tune in for more events at NorCal House of Chess -chess camps, group classes, casual games, Grandmaster lectures/simuls and quality chess tournaments! Many famous players, coaches and celebrities such as GM **Susan Polgar**, GM **Akopian**, GM **Ian Rogers** (Australia), GM **Bojkov** (Bulgaria), IM **Jennifer Shahade**, and many more have visited us in Fremont. If you want to come and check out or be part of our events, please visit us at www.norcalhouseofchess.com.

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