

38th CalChess Scholastic Champions

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by Michael Aigner

Around 1000 Bay Area youngsters descended on the [Santa Clara Convention Center](#) for the **38th annual CalChess State Scholastic Championships**. Participants ranged from novices attending their first serious chess tournament to a co-champion of the World Youth U12. Many wide-eyed kids were accompanied by equally bewildered parents. *This turnout proves that scholastic chess still thrives in California!*



K-12 Champ FM Cameron Wheeler

Twenty juniors rated 2000+ entered the FIDE-rated **High School Championship**, which this year seemed more like a local Open section (*except without IM DeGuzman*). Indeed, one-third of the players, including the three masters at the top, had not yet begun high school. Paradoxically, only three high school students sat at the first half-dozen boards in the last round. And surprising few, the 2291-rated 7th grader FM **Cameron Wheeler** from Cupertino swept the field. No doubt he faced a stiffer challenge at the [World Youth U12](#) in Slovenia last year. The next two in the final standings were his friends **Kesav Viswanadha** and **Vignesh Panchanatham**, both also in Middle School, and National Masters too.

Only a pair of High School students went undefeated (each yielded two draws) in the 5-round tournament: sophomore **Taylor McCreary** of San Luis Obispo and freshman **Hunter Klotz-burwell** of Palo Alto. Taylor, underrated at 1872, earned respect and rating by beating 1960 and 2050 plus drawing with two even higher experts. However, she technically lives in Southern California, and consequently Hunter, rated 2083, qualified for the prestigious [Denker Tournament of High School Champions](#) in

Wisconsin this summer. Fair travels and good luck!

Bravo to all of the winners! The following State Champions were crowned. Click here for full [Individual Results](#) and [Team Results](#), including the 11 Junior Varsity, Booster and Rookie sections. Trivia: A whopping 109 children turned out to play in the 1-3 Rookie (unrated) division, the largest of the weekend. *Can you say Scholar's Mate?*



Denker rep Hunter Klotz-burwell

K-12 Championship

- **Champion: FM Cameron Wheeler** with 5-0
- Runners-up: NM Kesav Viswanadha, NM Vignesh Panchanatham, Taylor McCreary, Siddharth Banik, Allan Beilin and Hunter Klotz-burwell all with 4-1
- **Denker Qualifier: Hunter Klotz-burwell**
- Top Team: Kennedy Middle (Cameron, Kesav, etc)

6-8 Championship

- **Champion: Steven Li** with 5.5-0.5
- Runner-up: Anirudh Seela with 5-1
- Top Team: Hopkins Junior High (all MSJE graduates)

4-6 Championship

- **Champions: Bryce Wong, Seaver Dahlgren and Daniel Hwan** all with 5-1
- Top Team: Mission San Jose Elementary

4-5 Championship

- **Champion: Dante Peterson** with 5.5-0.5
- Runners-up: Pranav Senthilkumar, David Pan, Daniel Mendelevitch and Amir Dhami all with 5-1
- Top Team: Mission San Jose Elementary

1-3 Championship

- **Champion: Callaghan McCarty-snead** with 5.5-0.5
- Runner-up: Robert Reyes with 5-1
- Top Team: Mission San Jose Elementary

Kindergarten

- **Champion: William Chui** with 5-0
- Runners-up: Samit Pattanayak and Arnav Lingannagari with 4.5-0.5

Seemingly every year, **Mission San Jose Elementary** earns praise from this blog. What have they done this spring? Three weeks ago, they won **SuperNationals K-6** and finished Top 5 in two other sections. Then last weekend, **the Giants of chess crushed the local competition**, taking on *all those who dared* and easily winning all three CalChess Elementary team championships, two Junior Varsity divisions, and one Booster. Coach **Joe Lonsdale**, his experienced staff, and private coaches (e.g. **Ted Castro**, **Chris Torres**, **Wei Liu** and the veteran magician **Richard Shorman**) have molded quite a dynasty over the years! *Frankly, I am always amazed how they can teach a 6 or 7 year old how the pieces move in September, by April they are rated 600 and by the second year they have crossed 1000. Well done!!*



MSJE K-3 Champions



MSJE K-6 Champions with Coach Joe Lonsdale

The influence of MSJE extends far beyond 6th grade. The CalChess Middle School champion team at **Hopkins Junior High** consists of alumni of this great chess program. And by the time they reach High School, the former students return to teach the youngsters, sharing their wisdom from over the years. However, even the dominance of MSJE has limits. In the K-12 Open, the all-star lineup of **Kennedy Middle**, featuring two masters and two experts, predictably steamrolled the field. *Veni! Vidi! Vici!*

A special thank you goes to Organizer **Salman Azhar** of BayAreaChess.com for putting in literally hundreds of hours to prepare for the CalChess Scholastics. Nothing ever goes off perfectly, but by many accounts, the 2013 edition proceeded quite smoothly. Of course, a lot of credit goes to Chief Tournament Director and NTD **Tom Langland** (also CalChess President), his computer guru NTD **John McCumiskey**, plus the entire staff of directors and volunteers. *All I can say personally, is that I wish I could have been there. :-)*



- [Tournament Website](#)
- [Individual Results](#)
- [Team Results](#)
- [USCF Rating Report](#) (*not yet available*)
- [Photo Album by Richard Shorman](#) (171 pics) -- also on [ChessDryad](#)
- [Photo Album #1 by Azleena Azhar](#) (212 pics)
- [Photo Album #2 by Azleena Azhar](#) (154 pics)