

Winter 2026

RANK & FILE

Magazine of the Southern California Chess Federation

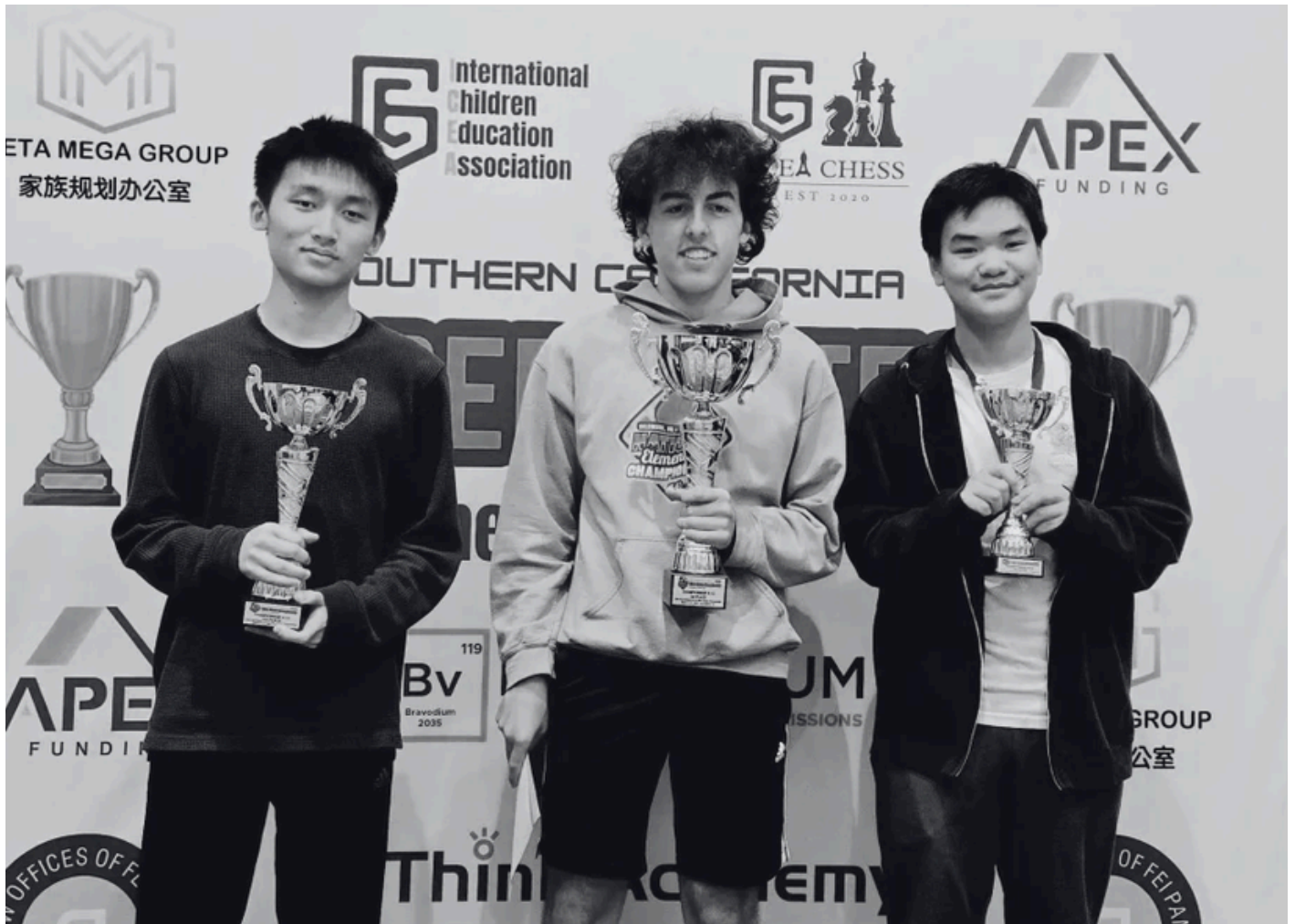


Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo

2026 Superstates High School Championship winners tied for first place (left to right): IM Isaac Wang, IM Julian Colville (champion), and IM Brian Xie

2026 SuperStates Festival

Highlights Growth of Scholastic Chess in Southern California

By NM Felix Guo

Article continues on page 18

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3. Be as brief and clear as possible to avoid heavy edits
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Attach photos to your email in a high-resolution
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notations.

DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING 2026 ISSUE IS:

June 30, 2026.

UPCOMING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EVENTS

2026 Spring Chess-Fest Camp

April 26, 2026

5-round Scholastic tournament. West Hills, LA.

See https://scchess.com/calendar_kids.html for details.

2026 L.A. Spring Youth Chess Championship

May 17, 2026

5-round Scholastic tournament. Glendale, LA.

See https://scchess.com/calendar_kids.html for details.

46th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day Classic

May 23–25, 2026

see page 22 for details

2026 Pacific Southwest Open

July 3–5, 2026

see page 23 for details

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LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Southern California has already crowned its 2026 club, scholastic, and seniors champions. Congratulations to Paul Rohwer, IM Julian Colville, Ararat Bagdasarian, Howard Wang, Renae Chen, and Tori Porat, who will represent Southern California at the National Tournament of State Champions in Grand Rapids, MI, August 3rd-6th. Congratulations to the San Diego Chess Club and Beyond Chess for winning the Inter-Club Team State Championship, the Open and U1800 sections, respectively. Congratulations to IM-elect Rose Atwell, who in March earned the International Master title, pending FIDE approval, and was crowned the national High School champion.

SCCF has also completed its restructuring as a charitable not-for-profit organization. The 501(c)(3) designation comes just in time as SCCF launches its annual fundraising drive to support the 2026 State Championship that will take place in LAX alongside the 46th annual Memorial Day Classic. Five GMs and two IMs have already indicated their commitment to compete for the title. SCCF urges its membership to maintain this event at the highest level, as it has done in the past two years, by donating to the prize fund at scchess.com or using the QR code below. You can also donate using Zelle by sending your tax-deductible donation to "sccf501c3".

The Board appreciates all those who contributed to this issue. SCCF is always eager to hear from its membership about ways to improve the quality of the content.

Sincerely,
The SCCF Board



Please donate to the SoCal State Invitational Championship!

IM Julian Colville: 2025 North American Juniors

By IM Julian Colville

Editor's note:

The U20 North American Junior Championship was held from December 1st to 6th at Morelos, Mexico, at the Hotel Dorados Conventions & Resorts. The tournament included two sections—Open and Girls sections—formatted in a 9-round Swiss system (90 min + 30 sec increment).

First place received an IM/WIM title and GM/WGM norm; 2nd/3rd receive FM/WFM and IM/WIM norms. Top players from Mexico, the U.S., and Canada came to compete in this prestigious youth championship.

Fresh from winning the U16 North American Championship in August in Canada, FM Julian Colville won the U20 North American Junior championship with an impressive score of 8½/9. FM Colville earned the IM title and a GM norm.

He shares two of his games here.



Photo courtesy of the organizer
Colville wins U20 North American
Junior Championship 2026

FM Donald Johnson (2317)

FM Julian Colville (2301)

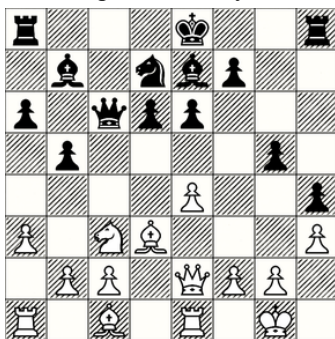
2025 North American Juniors (4), 0-1

Annotated by IM Julian Colville

Heading into round 4, I was one of four players with 3 points, my opponent another. While this game was not a must win, I certainly did not want to fall behind. **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Qc7 6. Be3 a6 7. Qf3 b5 8. Nxc6 Qxc6 9. Bd3 Ba3!**

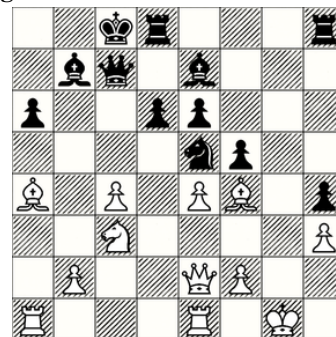


The Bishop should not be taken as the Knight on c3 would hang with check. The best moves for White are Nd1, guarding b2, and Na4, attempting to sneak into b6 or trade the Knight in a more favorable manner. **10. Bc1?! Bb7 11. Qg3 Be7 12. a3 Nf6 13. O-O h5 14. h3 h4 15. Qf3 d6 16. Qe2 Nd7** The main idea behind 15...d6. The Knight heads toward e5 or c5, where it will be ideally placed, vacating the f6 square for the Bishop if necessary. **17. Re1 g5?**

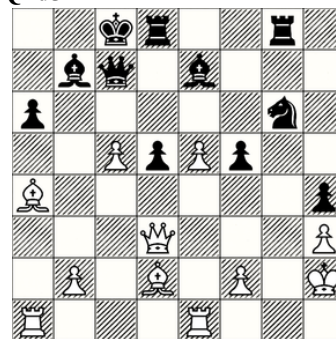


This move is simply too slow. While I would like to secure the e5 square for my Knight, White gets too much counterplay in the meantime.

(17...Ne5 right away was stronger.) **18. a4 bxa4 19. Nxa4 Ne5 20. c4?** (Better was 20. f3, anticipating Black's counter-play.) **20...f5 21. Nc3 g4 22. Bc2 O-O-O 23. Ba4?!** (23. b4 starting a pawn storm with the idea of b5 is stronger) **23...Qc7 24. Bf4 gxh3?! 25. gxh3?!**



(The only move to survive was 25. c5! dxc5 26. Bb5!! attacking a6. 26...axb5 27. Nxb5 Qb6 28. Bxe5 should be around equal, with attacking chances for both sides.) **25...Rhg8+ 26. Kh2?** Mistake. (26. Kh1 was best.) **26...Ng6 27. Bd2 d5+ 28. e5?!** Inaccuracy. (28. Kh1 was best.) **28...d4 29. Nd5 exd5 30. c5** White must close down the h1-a8 diagonal at all costs. **30...d3 31. Qxd3**



31...Kb8! The simplest move, stepping out of the way of Ba5 ideas, where Bd7 would be a discovered check winning the Queen. **32. c6 Nxe5 33. Bf4 Ng4+ 34. hxg4 Qxf4+ 35. Kh1 Bd6 36. Kg2 h3+ 37. Kf1 h2 38. Ke2 Rde8+ 39. Kd1 Rxe1+ 40. Kxe1 h1=Q+** Despite being somewhat worse in an unclear middle game, I

had fought back to win in a very important game. I thought I played relatively well, simply by using thematic attacking concepts in an opposite sides castling position. 0-1

FM Miguel Angel Montes Orozco (2281)

FM Julian Colville (2301)

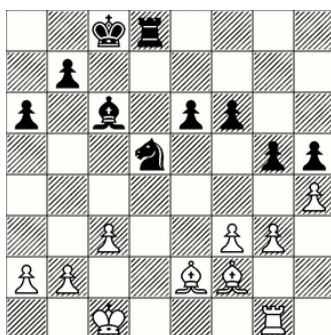
2025 North American Juniors (4), 0-1

Annotated by IM Julian Colville

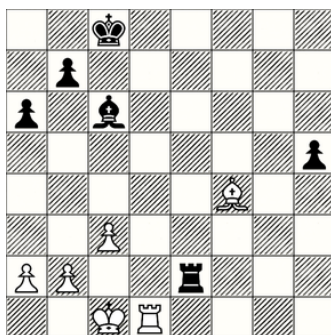
After winning my fifth game against the only other undefeated player thus far, I was now a full point clear heading into round 6. While a draw or even a loss would not put me out of contention for first place, it was still extremely important to win this game, keeping my momentum going and my full point lead intact. 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. c3 d5 4. exd5 Qxd5 5. d4 Nf6 6. Na3 Nc6 7. Be3 cxd4 8. Nb5 Qd7!? While this move may look unnatural, it has been played hundreds of times, over the board and online, with the idea of defending the Knight on c6 with the Queen. 9. Nbx d4 a6 10. Nxc6 Qxc6 11. Ne5 Qe4 12. Nc4 Bd7 13. Nd6+ Bxd6 14. Qxd6 O-O-O



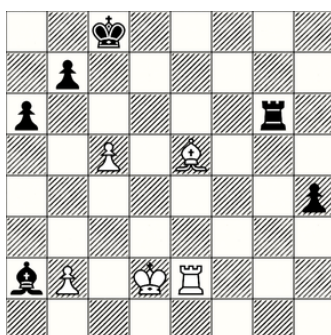
15. Qc5+ (15. Bd3 does not work due to 15...Qxg2 16. Bf4 Qxh1+ 17. Kd2 17...Ne4+ 18. Bxe4 Bc6! 19. Bxh1 Rxd6+ 20. Bxd6 Rd8, pinning and winning the Bishop on d6. Black is simply up a pawn.) 15...Bc6 16. f3 Qh4+ 17. Bf2 Qh5 18. Bc4 Qxc5 19. Bxc5 Nd7 20. Be7 Rde8 21. Bd6 Nb6 22. Be2 Rd8 23. O-O-O Nd5 24. Bg3 h5 25. h4 Ne3 26. Rxd8+ Rxd8 27. Rg1 f6 28. Bf2 Nd5 29. g3 g5!?



While not objectively the strongest move, it felt very natural to try to create some sort of weakness for white considering how passive his pieces are. 30. hxg5 fxg5 31. Rd1 Rh8 32. Bd4 e5! 33. Bxe5 Re8 34. f4 gxf4 35. gxf4 Nxf4 36. Bxf4 Rxe2

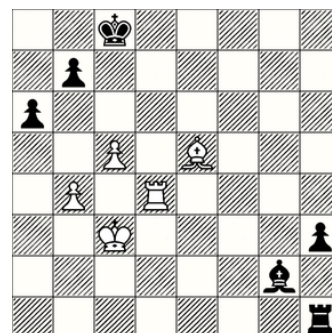


While objectively an equal endgame, Black is the only one with any practical chances. 37. Rd2 Re4 38. Rd4 Re8 39. Bg3 Bf3 40. Rd3 Bg4 41. c4 Re4 42. c5?! White should not over extend his pawns as they might become weaknesses rather than strengths. 42...Be6 43. Kd2 h4 44. Bh2 Rg4 45. Re3 Bxa2 46. Re7 Rg2+ 47. Re2 Rg7 48. Be5 Rg6?! (48...Rh7 supporting my passed pawn is better.)



49. Rh2 Rh6 50. Kc3 h3 51. b3 Bb1 52. Rd2 Rh5 53. Bd6 Be4 54. b4 Bg2 55. Bh2 Rf5? (55...Bd5 was much better,

preparing to activate the King. In the game, White should've now played Rd6 to hinder this idea.) 56. Kb2 Rf1 57. Be5 Rh1 58. Rd4 Re1 59. Bf4 Re2+ 60. Kc3 Rf2 61. Be5 Re2 62. Bf4 Re1 63. Rd3 Rf1 64. Be5 Rh1 65. Rd4??



(65. Rd2 was forced, with the idea of meeting 65...h2 with 66. Kd4! where Black has no checks with the Rook, and White will regain the pawn with equal chances.) 65...h2 66. Bxh2 Rxh2 67. Rg4 Bd5 68. Kd4 Rd2+ 69. Ke5 Bc6 70. Rg8+ Rd8 71. Rg7 Rd5+ 72. Ke6 Rd4 73. Rg8+ Kc7 74. Rg7+ Kb8 This game was extremely tiring, lasting for nearly five hours. I played patiently, with my opponent eventually making the final mistake. I won rounds 7 and 8 to clinch first place, granting me my IM title and one GM norm, then drew round nine to finish the tournament with an 8.5/9 final score. FMs Donald Johnson and Ryan Yang rounded out the podium with 6.5 points each, clinching an IM norm. I was very proud of my play in this tournament, but also my composure, not overcome with nerves once I took the lead. 0-1



Photo courtesy of the organizer FM Colville in Round 7 of NAJCC

3rd Annual San Diego Regional High School Team Championship

By Irina Nizmutdinova



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
Round 1. Front: Gompers Preparatory Academy vs Redlands High School



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
NM Sepehr Golsefidy (Canyon Crest Academy) vs Warren Zhang (San Marino High School)

The San Diego Chess Club buzzed with energy on Sunday, January 11, 2026, as 15 teams from across Southern California gathered for the 3rd Annual Regional High School Team Championship. What began as a local initiative has blossomed into a premier regional event, drawing talent from Riverside, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties.



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
Ethan Huynh (Fountain Valley High School) vs Anish Narang (Redlands High School)

For the 2026 championship, organizers replaced the previous "hyper-accelerated" pairings with a standard system, ensuring all teams—including debutants like Bonita Vista HS, Redlands HS, and Eleanor Roosevelt HS—began Round 1 with a random pairing. Final standings were determined by match results, with ties decided by tie breakers based on total individual points. This format emphasized consistent performance across the entire roster, as a win on Board 4 carried the same weight as a win on Board 1 for the team's final rank.



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
Lorenzo Antonio (Mission Hills High School) vs Alfonso Sanchez (South Bay Independent Study)

The tournament featured six rounds of G25;d5 games, an increase from the five rounds played in previous years to ensure a clear winner emerged from the competitive field. Leading the talent-heavy lineup were IM Isaac Wang (Cathedral Catholic HS) and FM Benjamin Tang (Del Norte HS), joined at the top boards by NM Sepehr Golsefidy and NM Roger Shi (Canyon Crest Academy), NM Vedant Maheshwari (Westview HS), NM Andrew Wang, and CM Ruhan Vichare (Rancho Bernardo

HS). While these titled players raised the level of competition, the event remained inclusive. Many unrated students made their tournament debuts alongside these experts, creating a unique environment where new players and seasoned veterans competed together in a shared team spirit.



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
Canyon Crest Academy Team (front left: NM Roger Shi) vs (Rancho Bernardo High School (front right: CM Ruhan Vichare)

As the final round commenced, the atmosphere was electric. Canyon Crest Academy and San Marino High School were locked in a dead heat, both finishing the day with near-perfect match scores of 5.5/6.0. The championship was ultimately decided by the volume of individual board wins across all six rounds. Canyon Crest Academy secured first place and the perpetual trophy by winning the tie breakers, followed closely by San Marino High School in second. Westview High School took third place with a match score of 4.0/6.0, having also edged ahead on tie breakers, while Fountain Valley High School rounded out the top four.



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
FM Benjamin Tang (Del Norte High School) vs Anthony Mokhov (Patrick Henry High School)

Evan Jet Lew (San Marino) and Harshith Bandi (Westview HS) were the top individual performers, both finishing the day with 5.5/6. Several other players finished with 5/6, including NM Sepehr Golsfidy, NM Roger Shi, and David Liu (Canyon Crest Academy); IM Isaac Wang (Cathedral Catholic HS); Charmaine Kwan (San Marino HS); Fausto Borquez and Joseph Swaykos (Patrick Henry HS); Oliver Quintanar (Redlands HS); and Daniel An (Eleanor Roosevelt HS).



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
Westview High School chess team (front left: NM Vedant Maheshwari) vs Cathedral Catholic High School (front right: IM Isaac Wang)

The event was executed by SDCC Scholastic Lead Irina Nizmutdinova and board member Jonathan Frye, supported by a dedicated staff including Kathryn Mokhov, Edwin Antonio, Navid Bajoghli, and James Harrell. As the players departed, the takeaway was clear: the San Diego

High School Chess Team Regional is a cornerstone of the SoCal chess calendar.

Winning Teams



Photo courtesy of Shailesh Maheshwari
1st Place Team: Canyon Crest Academy



Photo courtesy of Irina Nizmutdinova
2nd Place Team: San Marino High School



Photo courtesy of Shailesh Maheshwari
3rd Place Team: Westview High School



Photo courtesy of Shailesh Maheshwari
4th Place Team: Fountain Valley High School

2026 Tournament Roster

Canyon Crest Academy: NM Sepehr Golsfidy, NM Roger Shi, David Liu, Smaran Mukkavilli, Iniya Mathivanan. Alts: Shane Sitaram, Wesley Lai.

San Marino High School: Warren Zhang, Evan Lew, Andersen Yang, Chasen Chwang, Charmaine Kwan. Alt: Adelynn Yang.

Westview High School: NM Vedant Maheshwari, Leon Chen, Rohan Mudrageda, Harshith Bandi, Lucas Ding. Alt: David He.

Fountain Valley High School: Ethan Huynh, Khang Nguyen, Patrick Wicks, Alex Huynh, Remy Phan. Alt: Cayden Nguyen.

Del Norte High School: FM Benjamin Tang, Manasvi Macha, David Ma, Jacob Gelle, Nathan Trieu. Alts: Michael Xu, Jerry Ling.

Patrick Henry High School: Anthony Mokhov, Jonathan An, Fausto Borquez, Joseph Swaykos, Dylan Gomaidy. Alt: Dylan Truong.

Cathedral Catholic High School: IM Isaac Wang, Liam Brunton, Colin Holt, Wyatt Williams, Finn Brentnall.

Rancho Bernardo High School: NM Andrew Wang, CM Ruhan Vichare, Vishnu Nath, Evan Ha, Doyun Lee. Alt: Shriman Naineni.

Redlands High School: Anish Narang, Matthew Li, Oliver Quintanar, Mani Momeni, Richard Ramirez.

Gompers Preparatory Academy: Adalberto Martinez, Ismael Martinez, Ivan Martinez, Armando Martinez, Aliana Martinez.

South Bay Independent: Alfonso Sanchez, Abiathar Kubilis, Alphachrist Trinh, Ammanuel Trinh, Esther Sanchez.

Eleanor Roosevelt High School: Tanush Komatineni, Jaydn Su, Jarrett Brown, Daniel An, Vaishnavi Komatineni. Alt: Haoyu Ye.

Mission Hills High School: Lorenzo Antonio, Triston Tran, Angel Bautista, Luke Tsay, Joshua Chang.

Eastlake High School: Vinson Nguyen, Richard Cobian, Isabella Averone, Mateo Rioja, Wilson Hydes.

Bonita Vista High School: Juan Ramirez, Armando Zuniga, Ethan Yang, Rocco Drossi, Charlie Finch. Alt: Kensington Almodovar.

GM Arman Mikaelyan: 60th American Open

By GM Arman Mikaelyan

The 60th American Open was held from November 24–30, 2025, in Garden Grove at the Hyatt Regency Orange County. It is one of the longest-running and most prestigious open chess tournaments in the US, with a guaranteed prize fund of around \$40,000.

The event featured six sections (Championship, Expert, and various rating divisions) and is held in a classical G/90;+30 time control.

GM Arman Mikaelyan won the American Open Championship section with a score of 7½/9. Trailing behind him were GM Mark Heimann and IM Oleksii Bilych with 7/9. Mikaelyan shares his games with Heimann and Bilych here.

GM Arman Mikaelyan (2500)

IM Oleksii Bilych (2447)

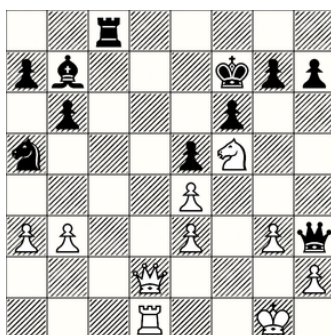
60th American Open (6), 1-0

Annotated by GM Arman Mikaelyan

In Round 6, I had to play against the very strong International Master Oleksii Bilych. We reached this position.



28...Na5? (After 28...Kh8, I felt the position was slightly better for White because of the strong Knight in the centre. However, when I checked the position with the engine after the game, I was genuinely surprised—there is a beautiful tactical combination here!!) **29. Qd3?** (29. Bh3!! Qxh3 30. Ne7+ Kf7 31. Nf5!!



Threatening Qd7. 31...Bc6 32. Qd6 Kg6 33. Qe7 Rg8 34. Qe6



White is winning here thanks to these threats (Ne7+, Nh4+ and Qg8) However in the game I played 29. Qd3) **29...Nc6 30. Qc4 Rd8??** (30...Kh8 He did not play ...Kh8 because of Nb6. However, Black has the intermediate move ...Qg4, which changes the situation completely.) **31. Nxf6+! Kf7 32. Nd5 g6 33. Bh3 Qxh3 34. Nf4+ Kf6 35. Rxd8 exf4 36. Rf8+ Kg5 37. Qd5+ Kh6 38. Rxf4 Qc8 39. Qf7 1-0**

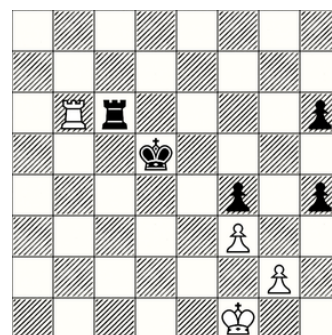
GM Mark Heimann (2520)

GM Arman Mikaelyan (2500)

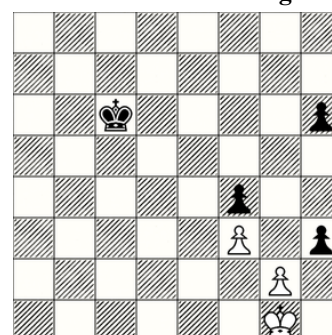
60th American Open (7), 0-1

Annotated by GM Arman Mikaelyan

This was the most important game of the tournament, against GM Mark Heimann. I was half a point ahead, with 5½/6, so a draw would have been a comfortable result for me. I would like to highlight the endgame that occurred. The position is objectively drawish, and White has several reliable ways to maintain the balance.



51. Rxc6 Kxc6 (I was expecting 52. Ke2. After 52...Kc5 53. Kd3 Kd5 54. Kc3 Kc5, the game would have ended in a simple repetition.) Instead, he made a crucial mistake **52. Kg1?? h3!**



If White captures the pawn 53. gxf3, then 53...Kd5 54. Kf2 Kd4 55. Ke2 Kc3, and thanks to my active King, I am winning. He resigned here. I had mixed feelings—I was obviously happy to be so close to winning the American Open after round 7, but at the same time I felt sorry for him. Mark had played very well throughout the game and only made a mistake in the final moment. **0-1**



Photo courtesy of Chess Palace
Mikaelyan wins 60th American Open

2026 Dreaming King Open

By Chuck Ensey

This 6-round event was held at the Sonesta LAX hotel over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in mid-January and drew a total of 240 players. This hotel is centrally located and has very nice ballrooms, skittle rooms and restaurants. The top section had 48 players; it was FIDE rated and required a 2000 rating or higher with no “playing up” allowed, which is why we call it the Elite Section. The clear First Place winner this year was **GM Arman Mikaelyan** with 5 points for a nice cash prize of \$2,400 (he had 2 draws and no losses). 4 players tied for 2nd-5th Place with 4 ½ points for \$925 each—**GM Andrii Baryshpolets**, plus 3 very young players: **GM Kirk Ghazarian** (20), **IM Julian Colville** (15) and **NM David Gasparyan** (19). As everyone knows, young players dominate in chess these days, it seems like every event I go to at least half the field are teenagers or younger. I hate losing to 8-year olds, but that is what happens these days! It seems my role in life these days is to make young kids smile by gifting them rating points.



Photo courtesy of Chuck Ensey
DKO: Mikaelyan vs Wu

GM Ghazarian was in sole first place after two days with 4 wins in a row, but had to miss the last day due to illness. He gained 15 points to get to 2608. It was great to see so many strong players in this event; 22 of them were rated 2200 or more. Two players tied for 6th Place: GM Samy Shoker from San Diego and FM Derek Wu (23) of Northern California, with 4 points for \$150 each. There was a 3-way tie for 1st/2nd U2300 between Martin Nilsson, Paul Inuma and Lucas Foerster-Yialamas, also with 4 points for \$533 each. Martin is from San Diego and played at the North American Open in December, but before that hadn't played since 2018! He did very well despite being a little rusty. I watched him lose a long and very close game with Kirk at the end of round 2. Lucas (19 years old) is also a San Diego player that made NM at this event, he has been doing well in our weekly Gambito Open events. Paul came all the way from Hawaii; we are always glad to see his friendly face. Please note: all the ages I have mentioned above could be off by 1 year, it is hard to tell from the USCF or FIDE websites if you don't know the birth dates.

The largest section was the U2100 section with 64 players, here we had another clear First Place winner in **Jackson Scamehorn** with 5 ½ points for \$1,200. **Marc Bronshtein** was Second Place with 5 points for \$600, he lost only to Jackson in round 5. Five players tied for 3rd/4th with 4 ½ points for \$120 each: **Tony Chen**, **Chloe Zamojski**, **Wayne Ballantyne** of



Photo courtesy of Chuck Ensey
DKO: Shoker vs Baryshpolets

Arizona, **JC Abadesco** and **Wesley Kwan**. There are a lot of young players here too.

There were 97 players who chose the 2-day schedule, including 7 re-entries from the 3-day. We were able to squeeze all of them into a separate ballroom (Salon A). Due to different start times, they could disturb the 3-day players if they were in the same room, so we like to keep them separate. The schedules merged together in round 4. Twenty players withdrew from the event without playing after signing up due to unexpected conflicts or illness. The \$15 withdrawal fee helps pay for the \$20,000 guaranteed prize fund, along with 8 players who paid a \$100 play up fee. The tournament made a small profit, so thanks very much to everyone for playing (last year we lost money due to the LA fires which hurt the turnout). We plan to play here again next year, so keep us in mind. If you pay attention to the Early Bird Special you can get in at a cheaper entry fee of \$110, so always keep an eye on the SCCF website for upcoming events.

Randall Hough was the FIDE arbiter. Jim Harrell directed the other sections with help from Jake Nemeth. Organized by Chuck Ensey. The SCCF website advance entry list was kept up to date by Chris Roberts and Chuck Ensey. Only two players failed to pay the required SCCF dues. It is hard to get everyone to comply, especially late entries. We would appreciate it if everyone would take care of their dues BEFORE the event starts, so please check on the website or email me or Chris and ask! It is good to check to make sure your section and byes are correct too.

Here are some other prize winners, for a detailed list see the San Diego Chess Club website:

U1900 Section: 1st/2nd Place: Ziwei Xiao (5) and Matthew Talukdar (5), \$900 each; 3rd/4th Place: Bhavik Chikkala and Chetan Somysetty with 4 ½ for \$300 each.

U1700 Section: 1st Place: Aaron Simo (5), \$1,200, 2nd/3rd/4th Place: Andrew You, Jeremiah Shen and Nika Goshteliani, with 4 ½ for \$400 each.

U1500 Section: 1st/2nd Place: Michael Sicner (5) and Dylan MacKenzie (5); 3rd Place: Yinxian Chen (4 ½); 4th Place: Jonathan Yu.

U1300 Section: 1st Place: Allison Olivarez (5 ½); 2nd Place: Aiden Xu (5), 3rd/4th Place: Angad Singh, Jason Nunez, Adhvik Avadhanam and Tuomas Virtanen, all with 4 points.

U1100 Section: 1st Place: Michael Rowe (5 ½), 2nd Place: Julia Wang (5), 3rd/4th Place: Gregory Kinney, Cole Lycett and Owen Hanson, all with 4 points.

DKO Winner GM Arman Mikaelyan also shares two of his games here.

GM Samy Shoker (2438)

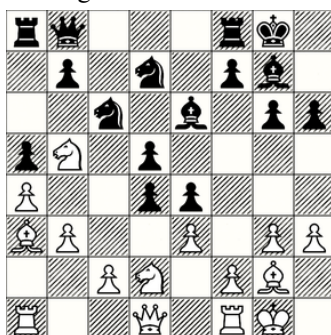
GM Arman Mikaelyan (2502)

2026 Dreaming King Open (3), 0-1

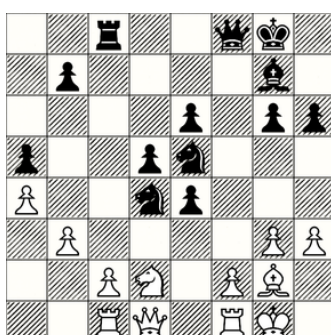
Annotated by GM Arman Mikaelyan



This was round 3 against GM Samy Shoker, and I was ready for this tough game. I want to highlight one part of the game. The position looks very complicated, and here I decided to sacrifice the exchange, after which I gained control of the central squares and the diagonal. **16...cxd4**



17. Bxf8 Qxf8 18. exd4 Nxd4 19. Nc7 Rc8 20. Nxe6 fxe6 21. Rc1 Ne5



I reached this interesting position with my Knights in the centre, and I was happy that the engine agreed with my assessment. We played many moves, and at one point Samy outplayed me. However, we were in a time scramble, and I eventually won a Rook-and-Knight vs Rook endgame. **0-1**

GM Arman Mikaelyan (2502)

FM Derek Wu (2226)

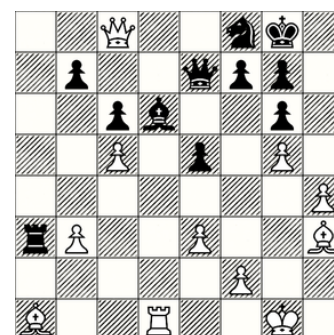
2026 Dreaming King Open (6), 1-0

Annotated by GM Arman Mikaelyan

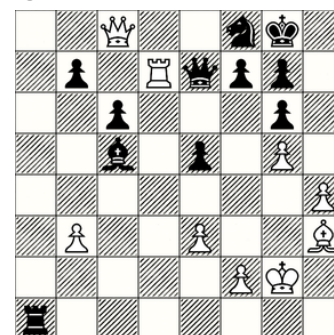
This was the last round of the tournament, and I was playing against FIDE Master Derek Wu. We both had 4 points out of 5. The position was slightly better for me, thanks to my Bishop pair. The best move for Black is ...Kh7, to unpin the Knight.



33...Ra3? 34. c5!



With a pawn sacrifice, I activated my pieces and set a trap for the Queen. **34...Bxc5 35. Rd7 Rxa1+ 36. Kg2**



36...Qxd7 37. Bxd7 Ra3 38. Be8 Ra7 39. Qc7 b5 40. Bxf7+ Kh7 41. Qxc6 Bxe3 42. fxe3 Rxf7 43. Qxb5 Nd7 44. Qd5 Kg8 45. h5 Nf8 46. h6 1-0

SCCF inducts Nine Historical Players to its Hall of Fame

By CM Ala'a Addin Moussa

For the second year in a row, SCCF used the Dreaming King Open and Martin Luther King Day as the setting for its 2026 Hall of Fame induction ceremony. This year, which coincided with the online publication of Phil Chase's (SCCF cofounder and longtime board member) brief history of chess in Southern California titled "FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA: A Short History of Southern California Chess: 1930-2020", the board decided to honor many chess players who played a significant role in creating this history. Seven of these have already been inducted into the US Chess Hall of Fame, and two others who will undoubtedly be inducted in the future. Here is the list with a brief description taken primarily from Chase's book and the US Chess HOF website:

HERMAN STEINER (1905-1955): Herman Steiner immigrated to the United States in 1929 from Hungary and moved permanently to Southern California to become chess editor of the Los Angeles Times in 1932, a position he held until his death. He founded the Steiner Chess Club and organized the Hollywood Chess Group, attracting movie stars such as Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Charles Boyer, and Jose Ferrer. Steiner also served as the captain/player of several US Olympiad teams, including the gold medalists of 1930 and 1931. He won the US Open in 1941, 1942, and 1946, and became the US champion in 1948. He won the California State Championship in 1953 and 1954 and the California Open in 1954 and 1955. He passed away while defending the California State Championship title in

1955. For his combination of playing and promotional abilities, Steiner was inducted into the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame in 2010.

JACQUELINE PIATIGORSKY (1911-2012): Jacqueline Piatigorsky was a French-born artist, author, sculptor, and generous patron of the arts, a daughter of the Rothschild banking family, and the most prestigious sponsor of chess events—particularly in Southern California—in the 20th century. She represented the United States in the first Women's Chess Olympiad in 1957, winning an individual bronze medal on Board 2. However, Piatigorsky is best remembered for organizing two of the greatest American chess tournaments, the 1963 and 1966 Piatigorsky Cups. Committed to promoting youth chess, she created scholastic programs in southern California in the early 1960s through the Piatigorsky Foundation decades before they became common. She also initiated the U.S. Junior Closed Chess Championship and provided support for the U.S. and U.S. Women's Chess Championships. She was inducted into the US Chess Hall of Fame in 2014.

ISAAC KASHDAN (1905-1985): Known as "the Little Capablanca," Kashdan played the top board on five US Olympiad teams (1928, 1930, 1931, 1933, 1937), three of which won the team gold medal. Kashdan's amazing Olympiad score of +52 -5 =22 is the best U.S. result in history. By the 1950s, Kashdan and his family moved to California for health reasons, and he expanded his chess career to include journalism, tournament organization & direction,

and non-playing roles as the captain of US Olympic teams. Kashdan took over the LA Times chess column in 1955 until 1982. Isaac Kashdan was one of the first Americans to earn the title of Grandmaster and the title of International Arbiter. He was inducted into the US Chess Hall of Fame in 1986.



Photo courtesy of GM Christiansen
Hall of Fame Inductee GM Christiansen

LARRY CHRISTIANSEN (1956-present): A native of Southern California (Riverside), Larry now resides in Cambridge, Mass. Christiansen burst into the national chess scene in 1971 as a 14-year-old, becoming the first junior high school student to win the national high school championship. He proceeded to dominate the US Junior Championship, winning the event for three consecutive years (1973, 1974, 1975). After winning the Torremolinos tournament in 1977, Christiansen received the GM title at 21, one of the five youngest Americans to achieve that status. He would win the US Championship

three times (1980, 1983, 2002). Christiansen also represented the US in 11 Olympiads, including the silver medalist team of 1990, and the bronze medalists of 1982, 1984, 1986, and 1996. On the American scene, he was also a three-time winner of the US Open. Christiansen's attacking style is reflected in his memoirs, "Storming the Barricades" (2000) and "Rocking the Ramparts" (2003). He was inducted into the US Chess Hall of Fame in 2008.

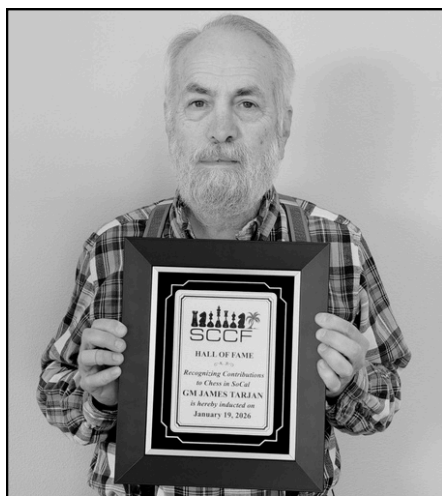


Photo courtesy of GM Tarjan
Hall of Fame Inductee GM Tarjan

JAMES TARJAN (1952-present): Tarjan, who grew up often playing at the Cashio Street Student Chess Club in LA. Few have represented the United States in Chess Olympiads with greater distinction than James Tarjan. He played five times from 1974 to 1982, winning four team (one gold, three bronze) and three individual (two gold and one bronze) medals. An active player from 1965 to his 1984 retirement, Tarjan returned to the game in 2014 with spectacular results. In 2017, he defeated former World Champion Vladimir Kramnik, then ranked number three in the world at 2803 FIDE, en route to a rating performance of 2671, to date the best result by an American player aged 65 or older. He was inducted into the US Chess Hall of Fame in 2022.

DIANE SAVEREIDE (1954-present): Diane graduated from Culver City HS in 1972 and then attended UCLA. By 1973, she was an active tournament participant at Santa Monica Bay Chess Club and soon began to play at Lina Grumette's Chess Set in Hollywood. She became the dominant U.S. women's player through the 1970s and 1980s. She is a five-time U.S. Women's Champion, finishing clear first in 1975, 1976, 1981, and 1984, and was only the second American woman to achieve a master rating. Saveride gave up chess in favor of a more lucrative career, first as a computer programmer with NASA and then as a software developer in Los Angeles. Saveride was inducted into the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame in 2010.

JOHN WATSON (1951-present): A longtime Southern California resident, John Watson is one of the greatest writers in the history of American chess. Among the many important books he has authored during the past four decades are the groundbreaking *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy* (2002) and *Chess Strategy in Action* (2003). He authored seminal works on the English Opening and French Defense. A frequent contributor to *Chess Life* since the 1970s, Watson is well known for his insightful book reviews. He was a pioneer in early internet journalism, with weekly shows including "Chess Talk with John Watson" for the Internet Chess Club. As an international master, Watson was the first U.S. National High School champion. He was inducted into the US Chess Hall of Fame in 2022.

ANTHONY SAIDY (1937- present): Saidy was one of America's strongest players (and the highest rated Southern Californian) during his

peak years of the 1960s and 1970s. Saidy served as a doctor in the Peace Corps and provided expertise on the treatment of tuberculosis for Los Angeles County until his late 70s. His defeat of GM Vladimir Belous in 2019 at the National Open made Saidy the oldest player ever to win over a grandmaster (82 years old).



Photo courtesy of Chess Review Magazine
Fischer (left) versus Saidy in famous last-round game of the United States Chess Championship

JEREMY SILMAN (1954-2023): Jeremy started to play chess in San Diego in the late 1960s. After spending many years in NorCal, Jeremy moved to Los Angeles in the 1980s to serve as the editor of the bi-weekly publications "Players Chess News" and "Theory and Analysis", and produced his best sellers which include: "The Complete Book of Chess Strategy," "The Amateur's Mind," "Silman's Complete Endgame Course" and "How to Reassess Your Chess". His books have sold more than a million copies in the United States.



Photo courtesy of Chess Review Magazine
Judit Polgar and Jeremy Silman ponder analysis between Anatoly Karpov and Yasser Seirawan

San Diego Chess Club Hosts Record-Breaking 2026 SCCF Inter-Club State Championship

By Irina Nizmutdinova



Photo courtesy of Shailesh Maheshwari
Rayansh Maheshwari (SDCC Team B) is shaking hands with SCCF President, NM Alaa Moussa (Temecula Chess Club Team A)

The San Diego Chess Club (SDCC) was buzzing with competitive team energy on Sunday, February 22, 2026, as it played host to the SCCF Inter-Club State Championship. Heavy interest from across Southern California sparked a massive turnout, as teams converged from all over the region. It was a rare and vital opportunity to connect our many distinct chess communities in one large, friendly event.

In a stunning display of regional growth, 32 teams—comprising 133 players—filled the hall. This turnout

represents a historic milestone, making the event two and a half times larger than the inaugural 2025 SCCF Inter-Club Championship. To ensure the event appealed to players of all ratings, the field was split into two balanced sections (Open and U1800), with an equal number of 16 teams in both the Championship and Reserve divisions.

The Grinding Format and Community Spirit

The championship utilized a traditional 4-on-4 team format, with boards ordered by strength so that each team's top-rated player faced off on Board 1. The time control was a demanding G/60;d5, making for a whole-day event. Teams began checking in as early as 9:30 AM, with the final rounds stretching into the late evening.

However, it wasn't all intense calculation. Between the rounds, the teams took a collective pizza break—a chance to step away from the clocks, socialize, and meet players from every corner of Southern California. This camaraderie turned the tournament

into more than just a competition; it was a celebration of a shared passion for the game.



Photo courtesy of Shailesh Maheshwari
IM Julian Colville (ICEA Chess Team A) vs CM Hayden Karkainen (Santa Barbara and Ventura Chess Clubs)

Championship Section: A Hometown Victory

The Championship (Open) section brought together 16 teams for a demanding battle of strategy. San Diego Chess Club Team A and ICEA Chess Team A each finished with 3.5/4 match points and 12 game points. After drawing their head-to-head encounter in round three, the San Diego team narrowly claimed first place on tie-breaks, successfully defending their 2025 title on home ground.

The ICEA lineup—IM Julian Colville, NM Felix Guo, Sabarish Kailasam, and Chloe Zamojski—delivered an outstanding performance, falling just short of first place. Meanwhile, Simply Chess, led by CM Ararat Bagdasarian alongside CM Glenn Zhang, Howard Wang, and George Huang, showed great resilience to secure third place.



Photo courtesy of Maria Ordanza
San Diego Chess Club Team B: Pear Xu, Elkaei Rivera, Navid Bajoghli and Rayansh Maheshwari

The winning SDCC team—FM Benjamin Tang, NM Ephraim Rosenstock, NM Arseniy Kryazhev, and NM Sarthak Gattani—demonstrated impressive consistency throughout the event to emerge victorious against strong competition.



Photo courtesy of Chuck Ensey
George Huang (Simply Chess Team)
 vs **Sarthak Gattani (San Diego Chess Club Team A)**



Photo courtesy of Maria Ordanza
Paschal Gay (Temecula Chess Club Team B)
 vs **Alec O'Neil (Alondra Park Reserve Team)**

Reserve Section: Strength in Numbers

In the Reserve (U1800) section, Beyond Chess dominated the field to take the top spot with 3.5/4 match points. Their balanced roster—Kayden Gao, Jaden Chen, Jason Ju, and Anqing Wang—proved too much for the opposition, and they proudly received the team trophy to take back home. They were followed in the honors by the National City Noypitz Pretenders (Jounie Angcao, Hector Ginete, Ildefonso Mamaradlo, and Alejandrino Baluran) in 2nd and Chess Palace Team B (Ike Miller, Prayag Dave, Stanley Wei, and

Christopher Lanning) in 3rd, with both teams scoring 3/4 match points.

The success of the weekend was a testament to the hard work of the organizers and the various team leads who coordinated travel and rosters. It was a true gathering of the Southern California chess family.

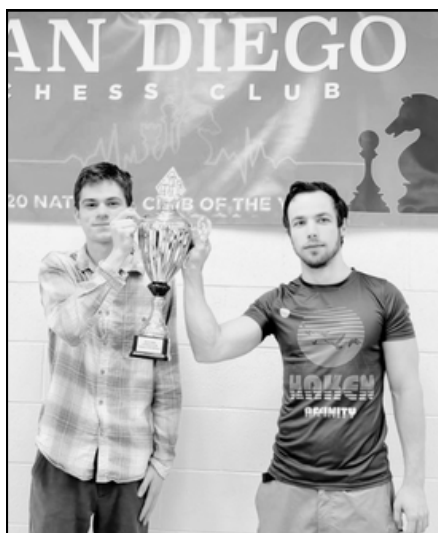


Photo courtesy of Maria Ordanza
San Diego Chess Club Team A's NM Ephraim Rosenstock and NM Arseniy Kryazhev hold 1st place Championship trophy



Photo courtesy of Maria Ordanza
Beyond Chess Chess Team's: Kayden Gao and Jaden Chen hold 1st place Reserve trophy

2026 SCCF Inter-club Roster

Championship (Open) Section

- **San Diego Chess Club Team A:** FM Benjamin Tang, NM Sarthak Gattani, NM Arseniy Kryazhev, NM Ephraim Rosenstock
- **ICEA Chess Team A:** IM Julian Colville, NM Felix Guo, Sabarish Kailasam, Chloe Zamojski
- **Simply Chess:** CM Glenn Zhang, George Huang, Howard Wang, CM Ararat Bagdasarian
- **Chess Palace Team A:** NM Minh Nguyen, NM Gabriel Sam, Jake Nemeth, Oliver Hsiao
- **San Diego Chess Club Team B:** Francis Ordanza, CM Ruhan Vichare, Sai Krishna, Anthony Mokhov
- **Temecula Chess Club Team A:** Marius Lucan, NM Alaa-Addin Moussa, CM Avinaya Subedi, Dave Gomboc
- **Santa Barbara & Ventura Chess Clubs:** CM Hayden Karkainen, Ethan Deshaies, Santho Srinivasan, Arjun Ograin
- **San Diego Chess Club Team C:** Elkaei Rivera, Navid Bajoghli, Pear Xu, Rayansh Maheshwari
- **San Gabriel Valley Chess Club Team A:** Ashley Lin, Kaiwen Yu, Jacob Murray, Manu Prasad
- **Tustin Brewing Company Chess Club:** Steven Miller, Stephen Echeverria, Peter Holzer, Joseph E. Warhula, Cody Oldham
- **La Palma Chess Club:** Ethan Long, George Shahin, Arcie Pragale, Randall Hough
- **Alondra Park Elite:** Tony Chen, Allen Futterer, Ethan Li, Taja Delijani
- **Day And Knight Chess Club Team A:** Kyle Chase Barry, Nestor Garcia, Ashwin Karthik, Edwin Ruiz
- **Chess Palace Team C:** Rommel Revilla, Reynaldo Del Pilar, Restituto Linga, Richard Wong
- **North County Chess Club Team A:** Jack Manata, Andrew Norman, Alfredo De Leon, Shaun Sweitzer
- **ICEA Chess Team D:** Siddharth Kaushik, Advit Venkatesh, Sahishnu Gopi, Sean Jura

Reserve (U1800) Section

- **Beyond Chess:** Kayden Gao, Jaden Chen, Jason Ju, Anqing Wang
- **National City Noypitz Pretenders:** Jounie Angcao, Hector Ginete, Ildefonso Mamaradlo, Alejandrino Baluran, Jerry Cupat
- **Chess Palace Team B:** Ike Miller, Prayag Dave, Stanley Wei, Christopher Fred Lanning
- **Northridge Chess Club:** Patrick Harrigan, Amin Zoghiami, Aryan Ali, Hovsep Osikian
- **ICEA Chess Team B:** Oskar Tianming Hu, Logan Gawon Kim, Matthew Hajo Choe, Youngjun Choi
- **San Gabriel Valley Chess Club Team B:** Albert Bao, Ryder Margalit, Alejandro Lopez, Tiffany Chen
- **Highland Park Chess Club:** Nika Goshteliani, Eric Carlson, Phillip Warther, Aron Rivin
- **Day And Knight Chess Club Team C:** Lance Sterling Fernandez, Matthew Tanabe, Xander Del Bosque, Nicholas Estrella
- **ICEA Chess Team C:** Michael Zhang, Aarav Acharya, Robins Rutherford, Daniel Song
- **Temecula Chess Club Team B:** Paschal Gay, Mark Mateo, Rod Cleveland, Evan Lomioan
- **North County Chess Club Team B:** Emon Bayrooti, David Grischuk, Pejman Sagart, Shea Paris
- **Sun Lakes Chess Group:** Charles Mullen, Luke Thomas, Steven Kassman, Walter Winfield, Robert Oesterlein
- **San Diego Chess Club Team D:** Ashwath Pradeep, Max Xu, Shailesh Maheshwari, Andy Galligan
- **Alondra Park Reserve:** Yan Chen, Kaitlyn Otey, Apollo Capinpin, Alec O'Neil

- **Day And Knight Chess Club Team B:** Kavicharan Padmanaban, Arokiavai Jesuraj, Tamiliniyan Padmanaban, Aarush Nathan
- **Coachella Chess Club:** Ray Wong, Steven Mariscal, Liam Linn, Ethan Linn

Annotated Games

NM Sarthak Gattani (2187)

Ashley Lin (1954)

2026 SCCF Inter-club State Championship (2), 1-0

Annotated by NM Sarthak Gattani

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3 I decided to go for a Catalan instead of my usual openings. I wanted to try something new this tournament, and this was a good opportunity. **3...Nf6 4. Bg2 Be7 5. Nf3 c6** The closed system of the Catalan. **6. O-O O-O 7. Nc3 b6 8. Qc2** Not exactly the best move in this structure with 7. Nc3. The main moves include Nd2 and Ne5. **8...Bb7** Not the best way to respond. (8...Ba6 is preferred.) **9. Rd1 Nbd7 10. e4 dxe4?** (10...dxc4 is a better response. White gets a comfortable position, having strong control in the center and better pieces.) **11. Nxe4 Nxe4 12. Qxe4 Nf6 13. Qc2 Qc7** (13...c5 is a common response for Black in these structures, but unfortunately it doesn't work here due to the simple 14. dxc4, with a discovered attack on the Queen.) **14. Bf4** I take the opportunity to develop my Bishop with tempo, with the key idea that after **14...Bd6 15. Bxd6 Qxd6 16. c5!** White has a pleasant and advantageous position. This is a usual idea in this structure, and White locks the black Bishop and creates weaknesses on c6 and d6.

16...Qc7 17. Ne5 I immediately try to navigate to the outpost on d6. **17...Nd5 18. Nc4 Rfe8 19. Nd6 Re7 20. Bxd5!?** This is objectively a mistake, however during the game I believed that no matter the capture back, my Knight would easily dominate the black Bishop. **20...cxd5?** My opponent recaptures with the wrong pawn, allowing me to grab more space on the queenside while the center and kingside remain relatively balanced. (20...exd5 was the better move. While the Bishop remains locked out of the game, Black secures control of the e-file. After exd5, I was planning on expanding on the kingside with f4 and the queenside with a4 and b4, while possibly trading rooks on the e-file. 21. Re1 Black struggles to find a comfortable response.) **21. b4! Rd8 22. Qd2** I slowly outplayed my opponent from this position. Unfortunately, I don't have the full game written due to time. **1-0**

CM Ala'a-Addin Moussa (2200)

Rayansh Maheshwari (1991)

2026 SCCF Inter-club State Championship (4), 1-0

Annotated by CM Ala'a-Addin Moussa

1. d4 f5 2. e4 I sometimes play this gambit to take my opponent out of a closed game. **2...fxe4 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 c6 5. f3 Qa5 6. Qd2 d5** (6...e5 7. dxe5 Qxe5 8. O-O-O Bb4 9. Bxf6 Qxf6 10. fxe4 {Kondratiev - Kuzminykh USSR 1950 per ECO}) **7. fxe4 dxe4 8. O-O-O Bf5 9. Kb1 e6 10. Nge2 10...Qc7? 11. Ng3 Nbd7 12. Bc4 b5 13. Nxf5 exf5** (13...bxc4 was better) **14. Be6 b4 15. Ne2 g6? 16. d5 +- 16...c5 17. d6 Qb6? 18. Bxd7+ Nxd7 19. Qd5 Qxd6 20. Qxa8+ 1-0**

IM Julian Colville repeats as Western Class Champion

By IM Julian Colville

Editor's note:

The 33rd Annual Western Class Chess Championship, organized by the Continental Chess Association, was held March 6–8, 2026 in Irvine at the Hilton Orange County Airport.

The five-round tournament is held in a Swiss format, with a 40/80,SD/30;d30 time control. The \$20,000 prize fund and 120 Grand prix points attracts chess masters and club players alike.

IM Julian Colville won the 2026 Western Class Championship, continuing his streak last year's Western Class Championship, where he came in clear first, even above GMs Mikaelyan and Tsegmed. This year, Colville tied for first place with FM Ryan Amburgy of Oklahoma with three wins and two draws.

He annotated his last round win against GM Jianchou Zhou who rarely loses a game and regularly tops the US Chess Grand Prix ranking.

IM Julian Colville (2364)

GM Jianchao Zhou (2580)

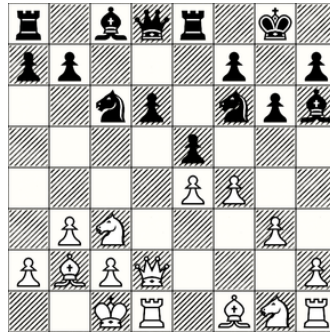
2026 Western Class Championship (5), 1-0

Annotated by IM Julian Colville

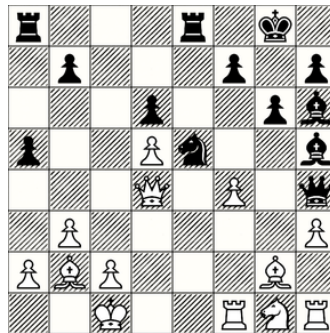
I went into round 5 of Western Class Championships with three points, needing a win to tie for first place.

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Qxd4

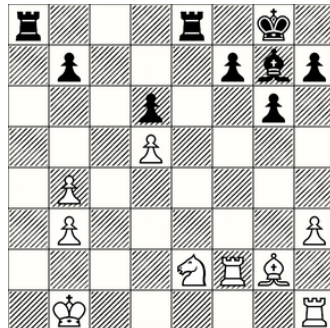
Nc6 5. Qd2 g6 6. b3 Bh6 7. f4 Nf6 8. Bb2 O-O 9. O-O-O e5 10. g3 Re8



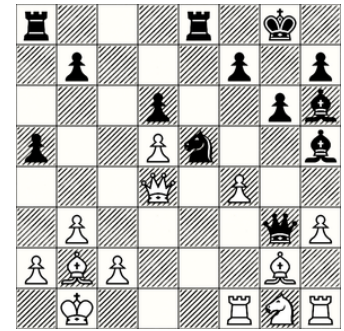
11. Bg2 exf4 12. gxf4 Bg4 13. Rf1 a5 14. h3 The end of my prep. **14...Bh5 15. Nd5?!** (Better was the simple 15. Kb1) **15...Nxd5 16. exd5 Ne5 17. Qd4 Qh4??**



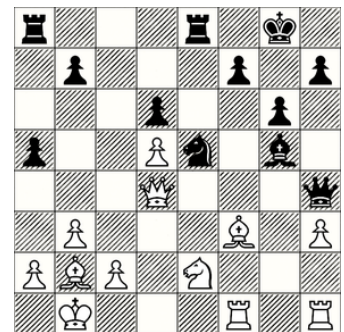
(Instead, Black had to play 17...a4!! **18. Kb1 axb3 19. cxb3 Bg7! 20. fxe5 Qa5! 21. a3 Bxe5 22. Qb4 Qxb4 23. axb4 Be2!! 24. Nxe2 Bxb2 25. Rf2 Bg7**



with more than enough compensation for the piece.) **18. Kb1 Qg3**



19. Bf3!! Bxf4 (19...Bxf3 20. fxe5 dxe5 (20...Bxh1 21. e6 Qe5 22. exf7+ Kf8 23. fxe8=Q+ Kxe8 24. Qa4+-) 21. Qc3+-) **20. Ne2 Qh4 21. Bxh5 Bg5 22. Bf3**



This game was only my third win against a Grandmaster, and a very nice one at that. His attacking resources with 17...a4 were completely inhuman and impossible to find. I tied for first with FM Ryan Amburgy after a GM victory of his own in the final round. **1-0**

2026 SuperStates Festival Highlights Growth of Scholastic Chess in Southern California

By NM Felix Guo

The 2026 SoCal SuperStates Chess Festival, hosted by ICEA Chess at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott in March 20–22, brought together more than 800 students from over 100 schools and clubs across Southern California, underscoring the rapid growth of scholastic chess in the region.

Over the course of three days, the tournament featured a wide range of competitors, from elementary school beginners to nationally recognized masters. Participants competed across multiple sections, including the Championship, Junior Varsity (JV), and one-day Action and Rising Stars events, creating opportunities for players of all experience levels.

This year's event saw a notable increase in team participation, with more than 20 new school and club teams joining for the first time. The expansion reflects a broader trend of rising interest in scholastic chess throughout Southern California.

The festival began Friday evening with Blitz and Bughouse tournaments, offering a fast-paced and energetic start to the weekend. A standout event was the free Team Blitz



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
2026 Superstates Opening Ceremony



2026 Superstates Tournament Hall

Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo

Championship, which included not only scholastic teams but also local and collegiate clubs. The diverse field contributed to a competitive and inclusive atmosphere that set the tone for the days ahead.

Saturday's Opening Ceremony and Team Parade served as a central moment of the event. ICEA Chess Founder Felix Guo and Junior Varsity Chief Tournament Director Sangeeta Dhingra co-hosted the ceremony, while SCCF President and Championship Chief TD Alaa-addin Moussa and Coach Jay addressed attendees, emphasizing sportsmanship and community. Dozens of teams participated in the parade, highlighting the increasing importance of team identity within scholastic chess.

The Championship section featured some of the strongest scholastic players in the region. After six rounds



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
SCCF President Ala'a Addin Moussa

of play, three International Masters—Julian Colville, Brian Xie, and Isaac Wang—shared first place in the K-12 Championship, with Colville securing the title on tiebreaks. As the Southern California representative, he will advance to the Denker High School National Tournament of

Champions, supported by a \$1,000 scholarship from ICEA, and has also qualified for the Southern California State Invitational Championship.

The Championship sections determined the following SoCal representatives and alternates for national invitationals, each SoCal representative will receive a \$1,000 scholarship from ICEA Chess upon completion of the National Invitationals:

- Denker (High School): IM Julian Colville
- Haring (Girls): WCM Tori Porat
- Barber (Middle School): Ararat Bagdasarian
- Rockefeller (Elementary): Howard Wang
- Ashley (K-3): Renae Chen

Beyond the Championship section, the Junior Varsity divisions saw strong competition across rating groups. Meanwhile, the Action and Rising Stars events provided accessible entry points for developing players, including many competing in their first rated tournament.

The ICEA Chess Team captured the SuperStates Team Championship title for the fourth consecutive year (2023–2026) in a dramatic finish decided by tiebreaks against a strong San Diego Chess Club team, which secured second place. The narrow margin highlighted the growing depth and competitiveness of team play throughout Southern California.

A defining feature of SuperStates continues to be its focus on accessibility. The Rising Stars sections welcomed a significant number of first-time participants, and all players received commemorative medals, reinforcing an inclusive and supportive environment.

The event also relied on strong community involvement, including all players, families, volunteers, coaches, and partners. We would also like to thank our sponsors for their generous support of SuperStates, including APEX Funding, Meta Mega Group, Think academy Irvine, Law Offices of Fei Pang, Rookly, Lingo Ace, Bravodium, Fish with you,

Sue and Dewain Barber and Jackman & Dieseldorff Family, whose partnership continues to help grow scholastic chess in our community.

Live coverage, supported by partners such as idChess, expanded the tournament’s reach and allowed a broader audience to follow key games and results.

ICEA Chess extends its sincere gratitude to all players, families, volunteers, sponsors, and partners for their support, and looks forward to welcoming the community back for an even bigger and better SuperStates 2027.



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
SuperStates 2026 Staff—See you in 2027!



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
From left to right: Jack Han, Summer Xu, Chloe Melissandre Zamojski, Julian Colville, Felix Guo, Jay Stallings, and Alaa-addin Moussa

Selected Games from the Champions

Brian Ye (1969)

Renae Chen (2010)

2026 SuperStates K-3 Scholastic Championship (4), 0-1

Annotated by Renae Chen

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 exd4 4. Bc4 Nf6 5. e5 d5 6. Bb5 Ne4 7. Nxd4 Bd7 8. Bxc6 bxc6 9. O-O Bc5 10. f3 Ng5 11. f4 Ne4 12. Be3 Bb6 13. Nd2 e5 14. Ne2 Nxd2 15. Qxd2 Bc6 16. f5 O-O? I thought that I had to castle anyway. (16...f6 17. e6± White now has space because of the e6 pawn) (16...Qe7 17. f6 gxf6 18. Rxf6) 17. f6 Re8 18. Rf5 d4 19. Bf2 (19. Bh6 g6 20. Bf8 Rxe5 (20...Rxf8 21. Qh6) 21. Rxe5 Qxf8)



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
K-3 Winner Renae Chen

19...Kh8 (19...Be4 20. Qg5 (20. Rg5 Bg6 21. Nf4) 20...g6 21. Qh6) 20. Rh5 (20. Qg5 Rg8 21. fxg7+ Rxc7) 20...Be4 21. Bh4 Qd7 (21...g5) 22. fxg7+ Kg8 23. Bf6 c4 24. Ng3? (24. Kh1) 24...c3 (24...d3+ 25. Kh1±) 25. Qf4 d3+ Black was trying to create counterplay 26. Kh1 cxb2 (26...Qd4 27. Qxe4 (27. Nxe4) 27...Qxe4 28. Nxe4 cxb2 29. Rf1 dxc2) 27. Rf1 Bg6 (27...dxc2 28. Qxe4 c1=Q 29. Qxh7#) 28. e6 (28. Nf5 Qxf5 (28...Bxf5 29. Rxf5 dxc2 30. Rh5 c1=Q 31. Rxh7 Qxf1+ 32. Qxf1 Kxh7--+) 29.Rxf5 dxc2∞) 28...Qxe6 29. cxd3 Be3 30. Qh4 Bf2 31. Re5 Bxg3 (31...Qb6 32. Rxe8+ Rxe8) 32. hxg3 (32. Qxg3 Qxf6 33. Rxf6 b1=Q+-+) 32...Qb6 (32...Qxe5 33. Bxe5 Rxe5 34. Qb4) 33. Rxe8+ (33. Rb1 Rxe5 (33...Bxd3 34. Rxb2 Qxb2 35. Rxe8+ Rxe8 36. Bxb2+-) 34. Bxe5) 33...Rxe8 34. Qa4 Rb8 35. Qb3 Qxb3 36. axb3 Bxd3 37. Re1 b1=Q 38. Rxb1 Bxb1 39. Be5 Rxb3 40. Bxc7 Kxg7 0-1

Howard Wang (2076)

Terence Kuang (1791)

2026 SuperStates K-5 Scholastic Championship (3), 1-0

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c6 4. e3 Nf6 5. Nf3 Nbd7 6. Be2 dxc4 7. a4 Bd6 8. Nd2 O-O 9. Nxc4 Be7 10. O-O e5 11. d5 cxd5 12. Nxd5 Nxd5 13. Qxd5 Nf6 14. Qxd8 Rxd8 15. b3 Be6 16. Bb2 Bxc4 17. Bxc4 Ne4 18. Rfc1 Rac8 19. Be2 Nd2 20. Bg4 Nxb3 21. Bxc8 Rxc8

22. Bxe5 Nxa1 23. Bxc7 Nb3 24. Rc3 f6 25. f3 b6 26. Be5 Rxc3 27. Bxc3 Kf7 28. Kf2 a5 29. Bd4 Nxd4 30. exd4 Ke6 31. Ke3 Kd5 32. Kd3 g6 33. g3 h6 34. h3 h5 35. g4 hxg4 36. hxg4 f5 37. gxf5 gxf5 38. f4 Kd6 39. Kc4 Kc6 40. d5+ Kd6 41. Kd4 b5 42. axb5 a4 43. b6 a3 44. Kc3 a2 45. Kb2 Kd7 46. Kxa2 Kc8 47. d6 1-0



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
K-5 Winner Howard Wang

Ararat Bagdasarian (2149)

Glenn Zhang (2161)

2026 SuperStates K-8 Scholastic Championship (6), 1-0

Annotated by Ararat Bagdasarian

1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 c6 3. Bg2 Bg4 4. O-O e6 5. c4 Nf6 6. h3 Bh5 7. cxd5 cxd5 8. Qb3 Qc8 9. d3 Nc6 10. Nc3 Be7 11. Bf4 O-O 12. Rac1 Bxf3 13. Bxf3 Qd7 14. Bg2 Rac8 15. e4 d4 (15...e5 16. Bg5 Nxe4 17. Bxe7 Nxc3 18. Rxc3 Nxe7 19. Re1) 16. Ne2 e5 17. Bd2 Bd6 18. f4 Qc7 19. f5 Nd7 20. a3 Kh8 21. g4 f6 22. h4 (22. Qd5!?) 22...Nc5 23. Qc2 Qf7 24. b4 Nb3 25. Rb1 Nxd2 26. Qxd2 Ne7 (26...b5) 27. Bf3 Rc7 28. Kg2 Rfc8 29. Rb2 g6 (29...Rc3!!)



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
K-8 Winner Ararat Bagdasarian

30. Qd1 Rg8 31. Kf2 gxf5 32. gxf5 Qg7 33. Qd2 Qf8 34. Ng3 Nc8 (34...Rc3!) 35. Nh5 Nb6 36. Bd1 Rc3 37. Bb3 Rg4 38. Rg1 Rxg1?? (38...Rhx4! 39. Qd1 Rh2+ 40. Rg2 Rxg2+ 41. Kxg2∞) 39. Kxg1 Be7 40. Kf2 Nd7 41. Rb1 a5 42. Be6 Qc8 43. Bxd7 Rc2 44. Bxc8 Rxd2+ 45. Kg1 axb4 46. axb4 Rxd3 47. Bxb7 Rc3 48. Kf2 d3 49. Ke3 h6 50. Bd5 Ra3 51. b5 Bc5+ 52. Kd2 Bb6 53. Nxf6 Ba5+ 54. Kd1 d2 55. b6 Re3 56. Kc2 Rc3+ 57. Kxd2 Rc6+ 58. Kd3 Rxf6 59. b7 Bc7 60. b8=Q+ Bxb8 61. Rxb8+ Kh7 62. Rb7+ Kh8 63. Re7 Ra6 64. Rxe5 Ra4 65. f6 Ra3+ 66. Kd4 Ra4+ 67. Ke3 Ra3+ 68. Kf4 Ra1 69. Kf5 Rf1+ 70. Kg6 Rg1+ 71. Kf7 1-0

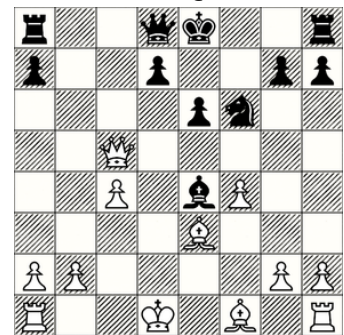
IM Brian Xie (2431)

IM Julian Colville (2394)

2026 SuperStates K-12 Scholastic Championship (4), 0-1

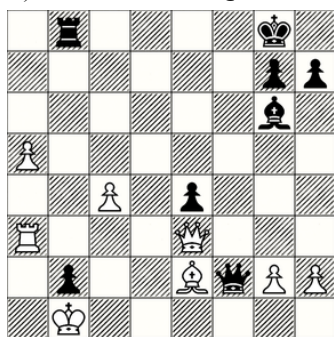
Annotated by IM Julian Colville

Going into round 4, I was one of 5 players with 3 points. While this game was not must win, a loss would cripple my chances. 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Nf6 6. Nxc6 bxc6 7. e5 Nd5 8. Ne4 Qc7 9. f4 Qb6 10. c4 Bb4+ 11. Ke2 While this move looks strange, it is the only one, as White must maintain control of the e3 square. This was still known territory to both of us. 11...f5 12. exf6 Nxf6 13. Be3 Qd8 14. Nd6+! Bxd6! 15. Qxd6 Bb7 16. Kd1 c5! 17. Qxc5 Be4!



Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn, as white is behind in development, with his king stuck in

the center. This was the last move in my prep. **18. Qd4 d6 19. Rg1?!** This move is a little bit too passive. Better was **kc1**, trying to safeguard the king on b2 eventually. **19...O-O 20. Be2 Qe8 21. Kc1 e5 22. fxe5 dxe5 23. Qc3 Qc6 24. b4?** I was surprised by this move, as it seems counterintuitive. It is not a good idea to push the pawns in front of the King so far, as they could become weaknesses and expose White's King. **24...Nd5! 25. Qb3 Nxe3 26. Qxe3 Rab8?** Better was **Rfb8**. The Rook on a8 will be more useful than the one on f8 as a5 will be played soon. **27. a3! a5 28. Kb2 axb4 29. a4! Rfd8 30. Rgd1 Rxd1 31. Bxd1 Bg6 32. Bf3? e4! 33. Be2 Qf6+ 34. Kb1 b3?** (34...Qc3 was much better for Black. 35. Qxc3 bxc3+ 36. Kc2 Rb2+ 37. Kxc3 Rxe2 38. a5 Rf2 39. a6 Rf8 40. a7 Ra8 41. Kd4 The position is unclear, but Black should be better.) **35. a5??** (35. Ra3 The only move, but nonetheless an extremely difficult idea to find. 35...b2 36. c5 Qf2? 37. Rb3 Where white recaptures on b3 with check.) **35...b2 36. Ra3 Qf2!!**



37. Bd1 Qf1 White has no good way to defend the bishop. This win placed me half a point clear, in first place. **0-1**

Kseniya Labaznikova (1775)

WCM Tori Porat (2191)

2026 SuperStates Girls Scholastic Championship (1), 0-1

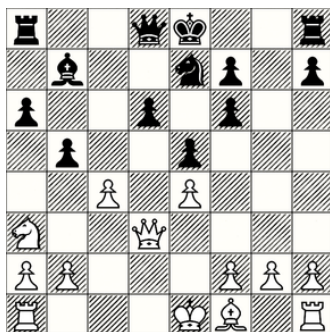
Annotated by WCM Tori Porat

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Bg5 a6 8. Na3 b5 9. Nd5 Be7 Typical Sveshnikov



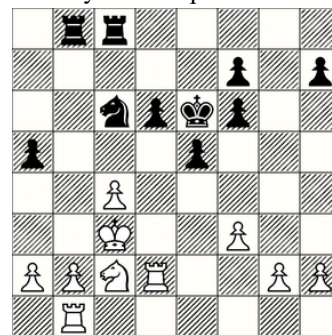
Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
K-12 Chess Champion Julian Colville

mainline. **10. Nxe7** This slightly deviates from the mainline. Black's best response is to take with their c6 Knight, despite the fact that it can result in doubled pawns on the f-file. **10...Nxe7 11. Qd3** (11. Bxf6 gxf6 12. c4 Bb7) **11...Bb7 12. Bxf6 gxf6 13. c4?!** This was an error from White, allowing me to force a favorable queen trade that leads to an endgame where I have more active pieces.

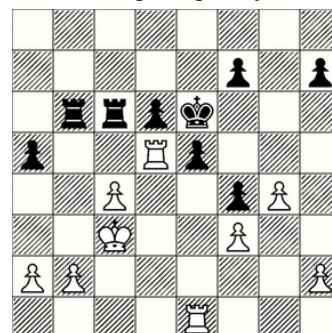


13...Qa5+ 14. Qd2 Qxd2+ 15. Kxd2 b4 16. Nc2 Bxe4 17. Nxb4 a5 18. Nc2 Rb8 19. Rb1 Nc6 20. f3 Bg6? (20...Bxc2 This move would've given me a much better position where I'm up a pawn. I thought that White would somehow be able to gain back my a-pawn, but they're too tied down to the b-file. 21. Kxc2 Nb4+ 22. Kd2 Nxa2) **21. Bd3 Bxd3 22. Kxd3 Ke7 23. Kc3 Rhc8 24. Rhd1 Ke6 25. Rd2** Again, I missed a way to win a pawn

here with the following tactical line...see if you can spot it first.



25...Ne7 (25...Nb4 26. Nxb4 Rxb4 27. b3 Rxc4+) **26. Ne3 f5 27. Rbd1 Rc6 28. Nd5 Nc8** This move is far too passive on my part, and now I'm in a visibly worse position. **29. g4 f4 30. Re1 Nb6 31. Nxb6 Rxb6 32. Rd5??** A grave blunder made in time trouble by White. Can you spot the winning move that disrupts equality?



32...Rxc4+! The rest of this game is smooth sailing for Black, as the material advantage and nearly passed pawns provide a definite plan for victory. **33. Kxc4 Rb4+ 34. Kc3 Kxd5 35. Rd1+ Kc5 36. b3 d5 37. a3 Rb7 38. Kb2 e4 39. Rc1+ Kd4 40. fxe4 dxe4 41. Rc4+ Kd3 42. Rc3+ Ke2 43. Rc2+ Kf3 44. h3 e3 45. h4 0-1**



Photo courtesy of Dedian Guo
Girls Chess Champion Tori Porat



REGISTRATION: <https://www.sccchess.com>

CONTACT: Chuck Ensey at chucnglo@aol.com, 858-432-8006

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WINDY CITY CHAMPIONSHIP (WCS)
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OPEN (SCO)
FORMAT: 5 ROUNDS, SWISS, G/30;D5
SECTIONS: OPEN (K-8) AND K-4
TROPHIES: OPEN (TOP 3, TOP U1000), K-4 (TOP 3, TOP U800)
SCHEDULE: 9:30AM, 10:45AM, 12:30PM, 1:45PM, 3PM
ENTRY FEE: \$35 IF RECEIVED BY 5/22

- FORMAT: 6-SS, 3-DAY 40/80, SD/30, +30;
- 2-DAY RDS. 1-3 G/45;D10 THEN MERGES.
- SECTIONS: OPEN (FIDE RATED), U2000, U1800, U1600, U1400, U1200
- UNRATEDS MAY ENTER ANY SECTION
- 2 HALF-POINT BYES ALLOWED

MAY 23-25, 2026

ENTRY FEES

- \$140 by 5/1, \$150 by 5/22, \$160 after.
- U1200 SPECIAL: \$100 by 5/1, \$110 by 5/22, \$120 after.
- U2000 PLAYERS: entry + \$50 if in OPEN

REQUIRED MEMBERSHIPS:

- USCF for all players
- SCCF for SoCal residents

SCHEDULE

- 3-day: 10-4:30 pm, 10-4:30 PM, 9:30-4:00 PM
- 2-day: 9-11:30-2 (G/45, d/10), then merges at 4:30.



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHESS FEDERATION

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST OPEN 2026

July 3-5, 2026 | Riverside Convention Center | 36375th St, Riverside, CA 92501

\$15,000 Prize Fund | 6-Round Swiss

\$15,000* PRIZE FUND		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Open Section	FIDE	\$1,800	\$1,400	\$900	\$600
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Under 1600		\$600	\$500	\$350	\$250
Under 1400		\$600	\$500	\$350	\$250
Under 1200		\$600	\$500	\$350	\$250

*Based on 200 paid entries | Scales proportionally | Provisional players limited to 50% | FIDE ID required for Open, U2000, & U1800 sections



SCAN TO REGISTER

REGISTRATION DEADLINES: 3-Day closes 9:00 AM July 3 | 2-Day closes 8:15 AM July 4 | Same-Day: at least 1 hour before Round 1

EARLY:
\$125
 BY 5/31

REGULAR:
\$145
 BY 6/21

LATE:
\$165
 BY 7/2

3-DAY SCHEDULE

G/90 + 30-second increment

FRIDAY, JULY 3

Round 1 **10:00 AM**
 Round 2 **4:00 PM**

SATURDAY, JULY 4

Round 3 **10:00 AM**
 Round 4 **4:00 PM**

SUNDAY, JULY 5

Round 5 **10:00 AM**
 Round 6 **4:00 PM**

2-DAY SCHEDULE

Rounds 1-3: G/45 d/5 -> merges with 3-Day at Round 4

SATURDAY, JULY 4

Round 1 Round 2 **9:00 AM**
 Round 3 Round 4 **11:00 AM**
 (merges) **1:15 PM**
4:00 PM

SUNDAY, JULY 5

Round 5 **10:00 AM**
 Round 6 **4:00 PM**

REQUIREMENTS

- Valid US Chess Federation membership SoCal Chess Federation (SoCal residents)
- Adults: \$25 | Under 18: \$20
- FIDE ID for Open, U2000 & U1800
- Up to 2 half-point byes allowed
- Rd 6 bye must be requested before Rd 3
- forms.gle/qQGfuRvVcmQNaXW6

VENUE & AMENITIES

- Marriott nearby -- \$150/night + tax
- On-site parking -- \$20/day
- Complimentary snacks & beverages (Fri-Sun) Chips, nuts, cookies, drinks, coffee
- Complimentary WiFi on-site Chess sets, boards & notation sheets provided Players must bring own chess clock

EVENT FEATURES

- Official vendor: ChessSet.com
- Blitz Tournament -- Saturday evening
- Grandmaster Lecture -- Friday, 8:30 PM
- No outside food/beverages inside venue
- Meeting rooms & skittles room for seating
- July 4th Fireworks -- 9:00 PM

CONTACT INFORMATION

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

Jake Nemeth

949-554-4539 | judgementdaystaff@gmail.com
 Contact Jake for all tournament-specific questions

ORGANIZER

Edwin Ruiz | Day & Knight Chess Club

951-283-2092 | edwin@dayknightchess.org

MAIN EVENT: kingregistration.com/event/PacificSouthwest2026



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