

30th CalChess Scholastics

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by Joe Lonsdale

The 30th CalChess Scholastic Championships were held at the Marriott Oakland Convention Center the weekend of April 16th & 17th. Frisco Del Rosario did his usual excellent job of directing. The rounds all started on time, there were no conflicts or incidents, and awards were handed out promptly and professionally.

The winner of the High School Championship section was Nicholas Yap (2209) with 5.5 points. Nicholas was the only master in the field. He took a very unusual path to the championship. He drew his first round game against Major Castleberry (1276), and then won 5 straight games. Nicholas defeated David Chock (1913) of Saratoga in the last round to clinch the championship in the 55 player section. David finished fourth with 4.5 points. Tyler Wilken (1856) and Henry Wong (unr!) tied for second with 5 points.

Nicholas played for the Mechanics Institute which was the top Club in the High School Championship Section with 17 points. Nicholas will represent Northern California in the Denker Championship of High School State Champions. The top high school team was Saratoga High (16) followed by Mission San Jose (15.5) of Fremont and American High (14.5) of Fremont.

The high school (U 950) junior varsity (JV) section (Note, the confusing habit of calling the junior varsity section "Premier" was continued at this tournament. However, the CalChess board has decided that this confusing term will no longer be used to describe the lower sections) was won by Arnold Hua. Arnold represented Skyline High School of Oakland. The high school JV team championship was won by Emery High of Emeryville with 14 points.

The Junior High school Champions section ended in a tie between Ted Belanoff (1627) of La Entrada School and Aaron Garg (1789) of Redwood MS in Saratoga with 5 points each. Belanoff, who defeated Garg in the last round, took the First place trophy on tiebreaks.

The top Junior High school team was Dunn Middle School of Los Olivos followed by Crocker Middle School. The top club was Berkeley Chess Club with 14.5 points followed by the Mechanics Institute with 12 points.

The Junior High JV (U 850) championship was won by Howard Siu of Chinese Christian School with 6 points. The team championship was won by Emery with 14 points.

The elementary school team championship section was a tough battle between MSJE (Mission San Jose Elementary) of Fremont and Challenger School of Fremont. These schools tied for first place in the K-3 Championship section two years ago. MSJE pulled out the victory by 15 to 14.5. Forest Park of Fremont was the third place team in the Elementary School Championship Division. The Mechanics Institute was the top club in this section with 11.5 points.

The Elementary (K-6) School Individual Champion was Mukund Chillakanti (1400) of Challenger with 5.5 points. Vivian Lo of Warwick was second with 5.0 points. Mukund's brother Kartik Chillakanti (1305) took third place with 4.5 points.

The Elementary School JV (U 900) championship was also won by MSJE with 20.5 points. Cherrywood of San Jose won the K-5 Championship with 18.5 points. Jason Robinett-Garcia (unr) of Cherrywood and Gordon Tom (unr) of MSJE played to a draw in the last round to tie for first with 5.5 points in this section. (Note: The K-5 and K-6 sections play together, but the teams compete for separate trophies.)

The Primary (K-3) team championship was also won MSJE of Fremont with 16 points. We believe that 16 points is a record team score for this section. The K-3 Tournament is only 5 rounds. Forest Park of Fremont was the second place team.

Kevin Zhu (1368) of Happy Childhood was the top rated player in the Primary (K-3) Championship division by over 200 points. With one round to go Kevin had the only perfect score. Kevin was paired against Hemang Jangle (1105, 3 points after four rounds) of MSJE in the last round. Hemang needed a win to get into the top five. Kevin only needed a draw to win the State championship. Hemang refused several draw offers and won an exciting game.

This left Kevin tied with Hemang and three of Hemang's teammates for first place with 4 points. The 2005 Primary (K-3) champions are (in tie break order) Kevin Zhu of Happy, Hemang Jangle, Warren Tian, Palak Goel, and James Kwok of MSJE. MSJE showed amazing depth in this section taking seven of the top twelve trophies including four of the top five. Five of these players are second graders and will be back next year.

In the Primary JV section (U 600) Forest Park of Fremont kept MSJE from making a clean sweep of the Elementary and primary sections by edging out MSJE 14.5 to 14.0. MSJE took second place. The individual winners were Thomas Yuan of St Anthony and Suraj Nair of St Albans with perfect 6-0.

There was a K-1 section this year. This section was won by Nicholas Yip of St Anne in San Jose.

The Oakland convention center is an excellent site for a scholastic tournament. There is plenty of room to play and to wait, BART access, and room to park.





