

36th Annual People's Tournament in Concord

Tuesday, February 9, 2010
by Michael Aigner



A change in venue. The old: Sather Tower in Berkeley at left. The new: Mount Diablo near Concord at right.



Some participants will miss the drums. More than a few others will not. For most of its 35 year existence, the **People's Chess Tournament** was held at Sproul Plaza on the campus of the [University of California at Berkeley](#). Love 'em or hate 'em, the drummers were always a part of the annual President's Day weekend tournament.

A sad sign of the times, state budget cuts, rising rental fees and lack of insider support forced organizer **Richard Koepcke** to find another venue. He teamed up with [BayAreaChess.com](#) founder **Salman Azhar** to move the event to the [Crowne Plaza Hotel](#) in Concord (*1/2 mile north of the [Concord Hilton](#) where last month's Golden State Open was held*). The weekend simply won't be the same, although the board game being played remains unchanged.

The [entry fee](#) has increased due to the rental cost at the hotel. The days of cheap tournaments seem to be history because few organizers can find a free or cheap playing site. Big sigh!! The nonprofit [Mechanics' Institute](#) remains the biggest exception. New this year are 3-day and 2-day schedules, plus an **experimental dual entry fee structure**: *players may pay the full entry fee to win full prizes, or pay 2/3 of the entry, but only be eligible for half of the advertised prizes.* So far, about 1/3 of the entrants have chosen the "economy" fee. (*If you're a junior playing up a section for the experience, then it makes sense to pay the economy fee.*)

- Event: **36th People's Tournament**
- Date: **February 13-15**
- Location: [Crowne Plaza Hotel](#) in Concord ([map link](#))
- Format: 6 rounds in 6 sections (Open, U2100, U1900, U1700, U1500, U1300).
- **3-day schedule**: Reg: Sat 10-11. Rds: Sat 11:30, 5; Sun 11:30, 5; Mon 10, 3:30.
- **2-day schedule**: Reg: Sun 9-9:45, Rds: Sun 10, 12:15, 2:30, 5; Mon 10, 3:30.
- **Time control**: 30/90, G/60 (rounds 1-3 of 2-day schedule at G/60)
- **Entry fee**: Regular \$99/98 or Economy \$69/68. Play up for \$20. Add \$25 after 2/11.
- **Prize fund**: **\$7,001** based on 129 paid entries. \$1000 (*guaranteed*) top prize in Open and \$500 in each of the lower sections. Economy players win 1/2 prize.
- [Tournament Flyer](#)
- [Online Registration](#)
- [Advance Entries](#) (89 players as of 2/11)

I will be there and look forward to seeing many of my students as well! Hopefully I have some free time between rounds (*or before 11:30 on Sunday morning*) to go over games.

Trivia question: *Who won the People's the last time it was not held at UC Berkeley?*