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*Chess News and Features from
Oregon, Washington, and Idaho*



**Dewain Barber, Owen McCoy, Dylan Denker
at the Barber Tournament of K-8 Champions**

Denker/Barber/NGIT 2015

By Owen McCoy

Every year since 1985, each state (and the District of Columbia) sends its top high school chess player to compete in a special tournament that is held in conjunction with the US Open: the Denker tournament for high school champions. In recent years, two more tournaments were added in the same format: the Barber tournament for K-8 champions (initiated in 2011), and the National Girls' Invitational for the top female chess players in K-12 (initiated in 2013). Due to its size, California is allowed to send two representatives to each tournament, from Northern California and Southern California. This year, these three tournaments were held at the Arizona Biltmore Resort in Phoenix, Arizona on [August 1-4, 2015](#).



Owen McCoy represented Oregon at the Barber K-8 Tournament.
Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.

The festivities began with an opening ceremony on [August 1](#), during which each state's representatives were called up to the stage, carrying their state flag, so that they could receive a commemorative medal recognizing their participation. (A few participants had to do a little research before coming so that they would know which flag was theirs!) An interesting feature of this event is that each state is eligible to win a special prize based on the combined performances of its three representatives. There were six rounds with time controls of 90 minutes + 30 second increment, so most of the games lasted more than three hours.

Oregon's representatives were Yogi Saputra (2086) in the Denker, Owen McCoy (1840) in the Barber, and Andrea Botez (1786) in the NGIT.

Washington's representatives were Noah Fields (2103) in the Denker, Neo Olin (2029) in the Barber, and Sangeeta Dhingra (1909) in the NGIT.

Idaho's representatives were Nathan Jiang (1785) in the Denker, Justin Siek (1172) in the Barber, and Dylan Porth (1038) in the NGIT.

The Denker tournament was won by FM Alexander Velikanov (2391-2408) with 5.0/6. second was a 5 way tie, but IM Andrew Tang (2475-2481) was favored on tie-breaks. Noah Fields (2103-2133) was among these players with 4.5/6, earning him fifth individual. Oregon's Yogi Saputra (2086-2075) made an acceptable 2.5/6, while the Idaho representative,

Nathan Jiang, (1785-1814) scored 2.0/6 while managing to defeat a strong expert in the process.

In the Barber tournament, NM Advait Patel (2378-2391) won the house for the second year in a row with 5.5/6. (Which, I might mention, has never happened before in any of the three.) Second place was a tie between Ryan Sowa (2159-2194) and Evan Meyer (2123-2163) both of whom got 5.0/6. Washington's Neo Olin (2029-2043) scored 4.0/6, and Owen McCoy (1840-1916) from Oregon (me) fell just short of that with 3.5/6, but I did manage to topple a 2264 in the process, as well as a 2088. Idaho's Justin Siek only got one point, but it happened to be the biggest upset overall!



Andrea Botez represented Oregon in the National Girls' Invitational Tournament.
Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.

WFM Jennifer Yu (2293-2286) emerged as the winner of the NGIT by the narrowest margin. Literally. Four players had 5.0/6, and Jennifer won on tiebreaks. Also with 5 points were Anupama Rajendra, Evan Xiang, and Veronika Zilajeva. Washington's Sangeeta Dhingra (1907-1909) and Oregon's Andrea Botez (1764-1777) each got 4.0/6, and Idaho's Dylan Porth (1038-1018) scored 1.5/6.

Here is my round 5 game from the tournament. This one was quite pleasurable!

Owen McCoy (1840) –
Truman Hoang (2088) [C89]
Dewain Barber
Tournament of K-8 Champions
Phoenix, AZ (R5), August 3, 2015
[Owen McCoy]



A view of Camelback Mountain from the Arizona Biltmore Resort. Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 e4!?

Truman arrived to the game three minutes late, but played the opening very quickly. I was unfamiliar with this line, so I had to improvise.

10.Ng5!?

This move seems to do well for Black in the chess.com database. Truman must have been surprised, because he played the little known

10...Na5!?

After which followed

11.Bc2!?

The game Wang Pin vs. Peng Xiaomin, Beijing 1996 went 11.Nxe4, and the game was eventually drawn.

11...Bg4 12.f3



Position after 12.f3

Looking back, 12.Re2! Would've been interesting. 12...Nxd5 13.Nxe4 Bxe2 14.Qxe2 When White controls the light squares, but is slightly behind in development.

12...exf3 13.Nxf3 Nxd5 14.d4 Bd6 15.Qd3 f5!?

White is better after 15...Nf6?! 16.Bg5! and is probably slightly better after 15...g6 16.Bh6 Re8 17.Nbd2

16.Bg5 Qd7 17.Nbd2 h6!

Forcing White to weaken f4 with...

18.Bh4

18.Be3 Rae8 is no better as the bishop will have to move anyway.

18...Nf4! 19.Qf1



Position after 19.Qf1

19...g5??

WOW! He's really going for it! This move is leaving his king out to dry. Indeed, he ended up regretting that move at the end of the game.

20.Bg3

My plan is to open up the center and queen-side so I can attack his open king.

20...c5?

I guess it's his plan too! (Note his awesome pawn structure right now.)

21.dxc5 Bxc5+ 22.Kh1 Bd6

I then noticed his undefended knight on a5, and hence played...



Yogi Saputra represented Oregon in the Denker Tournament. Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.

23.a4!

This is a standard move in the Ruy Lopez, which is aimed at opening the a-file and leaving him with a weak b-pawn. Although this is not exactly a standard Ruy Lopez position, the same strategies apply.

23...Rfb8

My knight on d2 is not well placed, so...

24.Nb3 Nc4?!

I might have traded that knight, because it actually proved to be quite annoying for him.



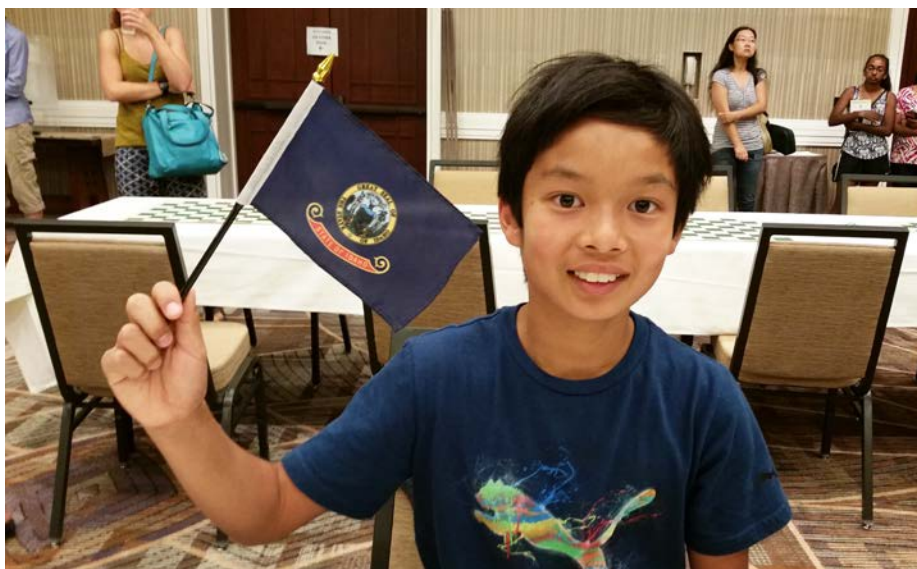
Position after 24...Nc4

25.Nbd4!

That sure beats d2!



Noah Fields from Washington won 5th place in the Denker. Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.



Justin Siek from Idaho played in the Barber Tournament and won a prize for the biggest overall upset. Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.

25...Kh8

Stepping off the a2-g8 diagonal. Grabbing b2 would not even win a pawn after 25...Nxb2 26.axb5 axb5 27.Rxa8 Rxa8 28.Qxb5.

26.axb5

I already had my idea in mind with this move.

26...axb5 27.Rxa8 Rxa8

Black seems to be holding together, but...

28.h3!!

I am very proud of this move. It destroys Black's coordination, and allows White to unravel.

28...Nh5

Definitely Black's best try. However, it proves to be insufficient after...

29.Bxd6 Qxd6 30.Kg1!

Suddenly Black has no threats and his position collapses.

30...Ng3 31.Qf2 Bxf3 32.Qxf3 Rf8 33.Re6 Qf4?!

Trying for a last stand.

34.Rxh6+ Kg8



Position after 34...Kg8

34...Kg7 35.Ne6+ Kxh6 36.Nxf4 gxf4

37.Qxf4+ Kh7 38.Qxg3

35.Qd5+!

Trying to transpose to the above variation.

35...Rf7?

Black was lost anyway, but he missed a mate in three!

36.Rg6+! Kh8!

36...Kf8 37.Qd8#

[Diagram top of next column]

37.Qd8+!

37.Qxf7?? would be disastrous (allowing a draw) or even 37...Qc1+ 38.Kh2 Nf1+ 39.Kg1 Ng3+ 40.Kf2?? Qe3#.

37...Kh7 38.Qg8#

See? He ended up regretting 19... g5!

1-0



Position after 36...Kh8

Overall, the competition was very tough, and all participants can be proud of being selected to attend. It was a great opportunity to enjoy the company of others who love the game of chess!



Neo Olin was the Washington representative in the Barber tournament. Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.



What do the Barber contestants want to do after playing 6 grueling rounds of chess? Play some bughouse, of course! Owen McCoy plays with Henry Li from Delaware, Grant Giovanetti from Nevada. Photo credit: Sarah McCoy.