

New York Dominates Nationals

by *Karl Heck*

The National K-12 Scholastic Championship was held this year in Lake Buena Vista, Florida at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort. In 2008, New York represented extremely well in the tournament, with three outright individual champions, one individual co-champion and seven team champions in the 13 sections of the tournament. Outstanding!

The USCF web site even featured a picture of one of our champions, sixth grade champion Michael Bodek, using a picture taken by NYSCA Vice-President Polly Wright. Another great step forward for New York. Here is the great picture:



Thanks, USCF. We truly appreciate it.

New York's individual champions in 2008 were the following:

Third Grade: William Graif (1846) -- 6 ½ - ½
Fourth Grade: Matthew Zeitlin (1764) -- 7-0 !
Sixth Grade: Michael Bodek (1831) -- 6 ½-½
Tenth Grade: SM Marc Taylor Arnold (2424) -- 6 ½-½

Of the four individual champions, only Arnold was the highest-rated player in his section. The rest pulled significant upsets on their way to national titles. Bodek defeated Brian Li (1937) in the final

Round giving draw odds, and defeated top-ranked girl in the section Sarah Chiang of Texas (1938) in round six. Zeitlin beat top-ranked Christopher Wu (1916) of New Jersey in the last round, and Greif defeated Jonathan Chiang (1856) of Texas in the last round facing draw odds as well.

Arnold played six of the top 10 players in his section, only drawing co-champion NM Alexander Heimann (2312) in the fifth round. Heimann won the first-place trophy on tiebreaks by half a point. In the last round, Anthony beat another Texan, Alexander Balkum (2101) to clinch the tie.

The only Texan to win top prize, Bob Siyuan Shao, just moved to Houston from Buffalo, so New York ought to get at least half credit for his victory. In the clutch, New York found it pretty easy to mess with Texas. There won't be a Lone Star flag published in *Chess Life* for this tournament.

Here is one of Arnold's wins over John Williams of Arizona:

Grade Nationals, Florida, 2008

White: Arnold, Marc Tyler

Black: Williams, John

Sicilian Defense

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bb5 O-O 8.Qd2 d5 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxd5 Nxd4 11.Bc4 e6 12.Bxd4 Bxd4 13.O-O-O exd5 14.Qxd4 Qc7 15.Bxd5 Bf5 16.c3 Rad8 17.Qc4 Qe7 18.Rhe1 Qg5+ 19.f4 Qf6 20.Qd4 Qxd4 21.Rxd4 b6 22.Re7 Kg7 23.Rxa7 Rde8 24.Kd2 1-0

In the team section, New York won **every** team title between second grade and eighth grade. While many posters to the USCF and other web sites said the reason was New York's financial advantage, some of the teams were from New York City public schools, not exactly bastions of wealth. The team winners in the tournament (three players per team per grade) were the following:

Second Grade:

Hunter College Campus School -- 13 1/2

Ethan Kwok (709) -- 5-2

Jesse Weinstein (1019) -- 4 ½-2 ½

Samuel Everett (809) -- 4-3

Hunter won by half a point over the Dalton School, another New York team.

Third Grade:

PS 116 -- 15 ½ points

Kadhir Andres Pillai (1612) -- 6-1

Alexander Crump (1358) -- 5-2

Isabella Lecrighia (1100) -- 4 ½- 2 ½

PS 116 finished one point against of The Village School, a private school in Houston, Texas.

Fourth Grade:

Horace Mann School -- 18 points

Matthew Zeitlin (1764) -- 7-0

L. Dillon Holder (1327) -- 6-1

Benjamin Fink (1275) -- 5-2

Horace Mann finished 4 ½ (!) points ahead of The Canterbury School of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Hunter College Campus School.

Fifth Grade:

Horace Mann School -- 14 points

Madeline Bender (1421) -- 5-2

Solomon Lister (1439) -- 5-2

Noah Echolike (1372) -- 4-3

Mamaroneck Avenue School

(White Plains) -- 14 points

Joshua Colas (1922) -- 6-1

Michael Ainsworth (1617) -- 5 ½-1 ½

Andrew Jacob Teller (143) -- 2 ½-4 ½

Ramaz School -- 14 points

Alex Eisenstein (1385) -- 5-2

Jacob Berman (1356) -- 5-2

Matthew Alexander Levy (1316) -- 4-3

Sarah Huguette Ascherman (994) -- 4-3

The three New York teams that tied for first finished a point ahead of two other New York teams, PS 6 and Hunter College Campus School.

Sixth Grade:

IS 318 -- 15 ½ points

Shawn Swindell (1496) -- 5 ½ - 1 ½

Jakob Kobajlo (1427) -- 5-2

Randy Rivera (1374) -- 5-2

IS 318 finished a point ahead of Hunter College Campus School.

Seventh Grade:

IS 318 -- 14 ½ points

Myles Foster (1654) -- 5-2

Alexis Paredes (1775) -- 5-2

Miguel Garcia (1569) -- 4 ½- 2 ½

Like in sixth grade, IS 318 finished just ahead of Hunter College Campus School by half a point.

Eighth Grade:

IS 318 -- 13 points

Steven Cardenas (1625) -- 4 ½ - 2 ½

Rochelle Ballantyne (1725) -- 4 ½- 2 1/2

Ezequiel Quinones (1323) -- 4 -3

Amani Eley (1421) -- 4-3

Jacob Martinez (1153) -- 4-3

Daniel Maciag (1687) -- 4-3

Horace Mann School -- 13 points

Michael Chiang (1967) -- 5 ½- 1 ½

Justin Karp (2019) -- 5-2

Christopher Kim (820) -- 2 ½-4 ½

The two schools beat Tampa's Liberty Middle School by half a point. In addition, New York teams came in second in the First Grade section (New Explorations into Science and Technology) and Ninth Grade section (Solomon Schechter Westchester).

Horace Mann (Aaron Schein, Ben Kessler and Amir Moazami) won the K-6 Blitz team championship with 19 points, sweeping the section by 5 ½ points. Solomon Schechter Westchester (Ben Gershenov, Michael Bodek, Max Steinberg, Alexander Reis and Joshua Abady) was second on tiebreaks in the K-12 Blitz behind Gilbert High School of Gilbert, Arizona. IS 318 (Miguel Garcia, Kevin Izquierdo, Rochel Ballantyne, Pobo Efekoro) also tied for second with 23 ½ points.

Especially given the national recession and crisis on Wall Street that has disproportionately effected the New York economy, the effort of all the players, coaches and parents to travel to Florida at considerable expense for this tournament is to be commended. It was an amazing result.