

On January 23, 2016, a record of 31 girls competed in the historic 2016 Inaugural Connecticut Girls' Scholastic State Championships held at the Farmington Libraries in Farmington, Connecticut and co-sponsored by the Connecticut Chess Organization, allClubs Chess, the University of Connecticut Chess Club and the Farmington-Plainville Libraries Chess Program, and supported by the New Britain Chess Club and the Farmington Libraries.

Beatrice Low, grade 4, from Coleytown Elementary School (Westport) took clear first overall and in the K-6 section of the competition with 4.5 – 0.5, after drawing top rated Sadie Edelman in Round 4. As a result, Ms. Low is the 2016 National Girls' Invitational Tournament Connecticut Nominee. This will be her second consecutive year as the Connecticut NGIT candidate. She will receive a \$300 award toward travel expenses from the Connecticut State Chess Association to compete with other state nominees in Indianapolis, Indiana from July 30, 2016 through August 2, 2016.

Other results in the K-6: Amelie Phung, TAG Young Scholars (New York, NY) won second place with 4.0 – 1.0, and Leeah Han, grade 4, Bugbee Elementary (West Hartford) won third with 3.5 – 1.5. Olivia Bonilla-Cruz, grade 1, Whiting Lane Elementary (West Hartford) won Top First Grader scoring 2.0 – 3.0.

The K-6 Team title went to Bugbee Elementary with 9.5 – 5.5. Team members were Ms. Han, Caitlin Striff-Cave, grade 5, 3.0 – 2.0, Arohi Tolat, grade 4, 3.0 – 2.0 and Chloe Lynch, grade 2, 3.0 – 2.0.

In the 7-8 section, Avon Middle School's Jade Logan, grade 7, won First Place, scoring 4.0 – 1.0. Samantha Fong, grade 8, Henry James Middle School (Simsbury) won Second Place, scoring 3.5 – 1.5.

Sadie Edelman, grade 6, Weston Middle School, won first place 6-8 with a score of 4.0 – 1.0.

Simsbury High School's Samantha Aiyathurai, grade 9 won first place 9-12 with a score of 3.0 – 2.0.

Additionally, Avon Middle School was awarded the first place 7-8 Team, and Simsbury High School was awarded the First Place 9-12 Team.

The greatest challenge of the event was the impending blizzard of 2016. However, this would not stop these 31 players from competing in the first ever all-girls' championship.

Although road conditions were quite challenging in New York as of midnight, the three player team from TAG Young Scholars from New York City made the trip, and finished second in the K-6 team competition. The event also featured the participation of 18 schools from ten Connecticut towns.

First place winners in each section received free entry to the 2016 Connecticut K-12 Scholastic Championships, courtesy of the event organizer, Connecticut Chess Organization, to be held on February 28, 2016 at the CREC Two Rivers Middle Magnet School in East Hartford, Connecticut. Section winners also received free entry, as defending champions, to the 2017 Girls' Scholastic Chess Championships. All placement winners in grades K through 7 received free entry to UConn scholastic K-8 tournaments for the 2016-17 school year from the UConn Chess Club.

Due to the weather on January 23, the library was forced to close early. The tournament, which was planned to consume six hours, was completed within four and one half hours by the tournament directing team of Robert Cyr and Norman Burtness

of the New Britain Chess Club, together with floor support from University of Connecticut Chess Club President, Alexander Fikiet, and parent, Jerry Aiyathurai, who doubled as administrator, representative and event photographer.

“I believe the event was a great success,” commented tournament organizer, Alexander Lumelsky, Connecticut Chess Organization and allClubs Chess. “I do not remember the last time I saw so many girls participating in a chess event anywhere in Connecticut.”

“I would like to thank all the players and the parents for making it a success regardless of the weather. I wish to give special thanks to our Tournament Directors for running such a tight ship. Five rounds and all peripherals in just four and a half hours is an exemplary performance. Thank you, gentlemen. That was amazing! Also, UConn Chess Club, without which much of the scholastic chess in the northern part of our state would not be possible. And to the Farmington Libraries, including Children’s Director Sarah Morgan and Director Jay Johnston for donating every nuke and cranny of the library to this event and keeping everyone warm and comfortable and out of the snow just long enough to complete this historic competition.”

“Finally, to my friend and partner, the late, great Tom Hartmayer: Tom, I hope, wherever you are, you are happy with what we have done here.”

Congratulations to all!

Connecticut Chess Organization is a non-profit company started by Tom Hartmayer and Alexander Lumelsky to benefit children’s chess and chess development in Connecticut. The CCO is also organizing the 2016 Connecticut K-12 Scholastic Chess Championships on February 28 at CREC Two Rivers Middle School, East Hartford and the 2016 Inaugural Connecticut Scholastic Blitz Chess Championships on April 2 at the Farmington Libraries.