

NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB

"THE HEART OF CONNECTICUT CHESS"

IN CARE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY RESURRECTION
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2025 NEWSLETTER

by Robert Cyr

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THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

Two-thousand-and-twenty-five at the NBCC started with a special presentation of awards to FM Nelson Castaneda and USCF NM Derek Meredith, both of whom received a certificate of achievement from Bob Cyr, club historian, for being mentioned in the annual newsletters from 2005 – 2024 at least 200 times. Specifically, Nelson (or “The Professor” as we like to call him) was recognized for his many tournament victories in the club in the last twenty years. Derek, our former spiritual leader, was recognized for his incredible work as club president (5 years) and vice president (2 years) and for being a such a gracious party host to his chess friends who he invited to his many galas at his home in West Hartford. Congratulations! I do want to recognize two other people who came very close to earning an exclusive spot in the 200-plus club: FM Richard Bauer and yours truly. Richard must be recognized for his many tournament victories in the club behind Nelson and for his outstanding work as NBCC games judge (or “Judge Bauer” as we like to call him). As for Bob Cyr, what is there to say? He has been noted numerous times in the newsletters for his continual volunteerism and his awesome devotion to the recording and preservation of our club’s history. Wow - what a way to begin a new year!

On January 26, the anniversary of the founding of the NBCC dating back to 1901, USCF NM Suhas Kodali hosted a tournament directing training session at his home in Plainville for four of our newest members who expressed interest in becoming certified club TDs. Each of these persons (Ian Wohlhieter, Ben Adelstein, David Mashkov, and Alexander Alvarez-Filshtein {“AJ”}) gave a presentation to the group on a particular topic in the USCF rulebook. They were very thorough with their lectures on some very challenging areas of the rules of chess. Besides Suhas, also at this meeting were seasoned TDs, USCF NM Derek Meredith, Norman Burtness, and Bob Cyr, who each contributed to the lively and intense three-hour discussion with the inductees with their years of experience and knowledge. Overall, it was a very engaging and productive afternoon as we welcomed in our newly minted TDs to the NBCC. Way to go! After the session, Suhas and his wife cooked pizza for the crew, while others ordered food from Panera Bread.

FEBRUARY

The first major tournament of the year at the club was our annual championship, which was held in January and February. This heritage event has had been a club tradition since the 1930s. This year, fifty-seven players, which I think is a record for this event, of all ages and skills from around the state competed in this historic event. It was nice to see our regular participants and some newcomers take action on the sixty-four squares throughout this tournament, which was comprised of two sections (an open and a reserve or candidates). There were seven rounds in this Swiss event. There was a week break between rounds six and seven to give those players participating in USATE the weekend before a rest from the club championship. The serious but spirited play on the chess board was clearly evident in this year's club championship, as masters and experts battled it out for the top spot in the open section. The reserve section saw many crucial battles as well. In the end, though, the co-champions of the 2025 NBCC Championship were USCF NM Suhas Kodali and USCF NM Jordan Groff. They shared the title equally, with no tie-breaks used. In the reserve section, Ben Adelstein claimed victory. Thanks to TDs Mark Bourque and Roger Bessette for directing, with help from Suhas as always.

On a chilly and somewhat inclement Presidents Day weekend weather-wise in the quaint town of Parsippany, New Jersey, a world record 350-plus teams (with four or five players on each team) competed in the grandest chess team event in the history of the world – the 55th annual World/U.S. Amateur Team East Chess Championship (USATE). First and foremost, I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Mr. E. Steven Doyle, who is an international arbiter and a national tournament director with half a century of directing experience, for organizing and directing this incredible event. He is the heart and soul of USATE. I also want to extend thanks to his devoted staff for the amazing work they did on-site and behind the scenes. After the opening ceremonies, with the national guard procession and the singing of the national anthem, USATE was underway.

This year, the club was supposed to field two teams to USATE. Unfortunately, USCF NM Derek Meredith, Joe Bihlmeyer, and Bob Cyr had to withdraw from the tournament due to illness. But there was good news! The two teams, thanks to the efforts of Captain Mike Pascetta on Team 1 from the NBCC, were able to merge into one five-player team. This only meant that each player on that team had to sit out one round and also one player had to sit out two rounds.

The name of our newly formed team was 4Forever in Blue Jeans, Magnus, which I was hoping would win the Top Team name, but unfortunately, a cuter name, If the Jeans Don't Fit, Magnus Must Quit, won. Overall, our team did very well in the six-round, three-day event. They performed excellent against the scholastic players, who have been known to give the adults a real challenge on the chess board. Individually, FM Richard Bauer and Mike did very well, but this was a team event, and we must note the good play by Ian Wohlhieter, David Fusco, and Ben Fields. The only GM who our club faced was Joel Benjamin. Richard had to face him, and the game was a hard-fought battle. But I save the best for last – our team won the title of Top Connecticut Team with a score of 4-2. Way to go, gentlemen!

USCF NM Jordan Groff, Niloy Chaudhuri, and Brian Dai from the club also participated in USATE. Even though they were not on full NBCC teams, it was nice that they represented the club at this event.

USATE is the holy grail of chess, and it always nice to have people come together in the spirit of this ancient game. This was Ian's and Ben's first experience at USATE, and they, like the other team players, relished the competition. If you never had a chance to play in this cool tournament, please make sure to put in on your bucket list. Until next year, my friends, this is Bob Cyr signing off and wishing you all the best of health and happiness in 2025.

I want to take this NBCC minute to recognize my assistant club historian, Roger Bessette, for passing the exam to become a USCF Local tournament director. Congratulations! Besides me, Roger joins USCF NM Suhas Kodali, Mark Bourque, and Norman Burtness in this level of TDs.

I also want to take another NBCC minute to mention that the NBCC is now a member organization with the Connecticut State Chess Association. As such, our members can receive discounted entries fees to CSCA tournaments. All they must do is use the code "NBCM25" to apply the discount (without the quotations).

Before we end with the February highlights, I want to send kudos to one of our inspiring and talented scholastic members, David Mashkov, for sweeping the field in a rated blitz chess tournament held by the club on February 18. In the club archives, David has won or tied for first place in the last three blitz events, a feat that has not been accomplished since FM Nelson Castaneda did so about thirty events ago. We love David. He continues to excel in chess and will no doubt become a master in the near future.

MARCH

After the conclusion of the club's 75th annual championship in February, we transitioned into a more casual schedule, with four one-week events in March.

On the first meeting in March, the club organized a joint simultaneous chess exhibition that was given by the club co-champions, USCF NM Suhas Kodali and USCF NM Jordan Groff. Twenty-seven players of all ages and skills (up to expert level) faced off against the masters. After nearly three-and-one-half hours, the last game ended. The only member to nick a win against the masters was Jack Qian. Three players earned draws: Jithya Sajeevan, Praharsh Varada, and Ben Adelstein. Congratulations! This was a very fun activity, and we cannot thank the masters enough for hosting this cool event.

On the second meeting in March, the club held an intra-club team tournament, the ideas of which were created by David Mashkov. The club has not held such a tournament in quite a while. We had thirty-two players in attendance. The competitors were grouped into eight four-player teams. Though the club planned for five rounds, only four were played. Congratulations to Team 5 and Team 1 for tying for first place with 3.5/4 match points. Of historical note, these two teams faced off in the final round and drew their match. On Team 5, we had Niloy Chaudhuri, Ian Wohlheiter, Benjamin Fields, and Ryan Leef. On Team 1, we had USCF NM Suhas Kodali, Brian Dai, Senthil Paramasivan, and Shan Nham. Of historical note, this was David's first official capacity as a tournament director in the club, and he became the youngest TD, at age 16, in club history. Way to go, young man!

On the third meeting in March, we held another "What are the Odds Blitz Chess Tournaments," where higher-rated players give time odds to their lower-rated opponents. Directing the tournament were two of our newest TDs (and youngest with David Mashkov): Ben Adelstein and Jithya Sajeevan. Ben and Jithya are also aged 16, so I just had to include all of them on the NBCC Hall of Fame. Throughout the tournament, there were many upsets of course. In the end, Pragyan Pandey swept the competition with a perfect score and became the second-youngest member to win a club tournament. I also want to thank Gert Hilhorst and USCF NM Ted McHugh, both of whom we have not seen in a while at the club. They brought some of their students to the club that night, and it was a delight to welcome them and welcome back Gert and Ted.

On the last meeting in March, another rated blitz chess event was held. There were many strong participants, including many masters and experts and some newcomers. In total, we had forty players, which might be a club record for a blitz event. In the end, FM Nelson Castaneda clinched first place, going undefeated with a score of 6.5/7. Incidentally, Nelson holds the record for the most rated blitz chess tournament victories in the club.

APRIL

The club commenced the second quarter of 2025 with its third Winner's Keepers event. This year, this event was dubbed the Bourque/Festa/Fields Chess Tournament. An impressive fifty-five players, one of the highest turnouts for a club event (the exception being the NBCC Summer Open Championship), participated in this four-week thrilling tournament. In the open Bourque section, the final game between FM Richard Bauer and Prahmarsh Varada, both of whom had to reschedule their game at separate times due to illness, would determine who would be crowned the champion. Well, my friends, this game ended in a draw, which meant that five players in this section tied for first place, which was almost a club record for most players tying for first place in a section of a tournament. Of course, we had to use conventional tie-breaks to break the tie, and, in the end, FM Nelson Castaneda edged out the other players by mere tie-break points to claim first place. The other players, in tie-break order, were Richard, Prahmarsh, David Mashkov, and Alexander Alvarez-Filshtein ("AJ"). In the U1800 Festa section, Yonatan Alexrad won on tie-breaks over Sumanyu Nandecha. And in the U1200 Fields section, Pragyan Pandey earned the top spot solo. This was Pragyan's first tournament win in a major tournament at the club.

On April 26, the club held its second game night. Despite the low turnout, the people spent a lovely evening playing board games, other than chess, like Blood on the Clocktower, Concordia, and Love Letter. It is nice that the church allows us to hold special functions beyond Tuesday evenings. Players were allowed to bring in food and beverages that night.

It is nice when chess clubs in Connecticut collaborate. In March and April, four of our club masters and experts, Joe Bihlmeyer, FM Nelson Castaneda, USCF NM Suhas Kodali, and FM Richard Bauer, gave lectures and simultaneous chess exhibitions at the Central Connecticut State University Chess Club on different days. I had the pleasure, as a CCSU alumnus, to listen to two of the lectures and play in two of the simuls by Nelson and Suhas. And, through persistence and patience, I was able to nick a draw against both masters. Now that was historic for me! The CCSU Chess Club, which is led by President Benjamin Fields, meets mostly every Monday in the student center. This club has about ten members. Hopefully, both clubs can host more joint functions in the upcoming 2025-2026 school year.

Lastly, the club organized another rated blitz chess tournament on its final meeting in April. And I want to recognize Luis Baez, a resident of Massachusetts, who blazed the field of Connecticut players, to claim fame as the winner in this event. It is such a delight when we have players beyond our state come to the club.

MAY

The club's next major tournament was the annual Arkadijs Strazdins Cup – Andris Strazdins Stein, an event held to memorialize two of the greatest contributors in NBCC history. This year's event did not disappoint, as we had many upsets and close games – all in the spirit of the legendary Strazdins. Fifty-three players competed in the Cup – Stein, which was the highest turnout for this event in club history. After much excitement and intellectual stimulation, we had a three-way tie for first place in the Arkadijs Strazdins section: Luis Baez, Joseph Bihlmeyer, and David Mashkov. Luis won the Cup on tie-breaks, and this was his first major win in a club tournament. There were also many ties in the Andris Strazdins section: Senthil Paramasivan, Dan Knowles, Aryan Jangle, and Benjamin Fields. Senthil won the Stein on tie-breaks.

JUNE

The month of June featured a lighter agenda for the club. I now share the memorable moments of the start of meteorological summer.

On Sunday, June 1, fifty-six chess enthusiasts from four New England states (CT, MA, RI, and VT) gathered at beautiful Wickham Park in Manchester to compete in the 2025 Planet Earth Chess Championship, an event that has been held almost annually since 2011. Thanks to those for playing in this fun event. The original ideas for this tournament were created by USCF NM Derek Meredith when he was club president. This year was an all-time attendance record for this event and one of the top ten highest turnouts for an event in the history of the NBCC, which sponsored this galactic outdoor tournament. Despite some persistent clouds and a northwesterly breeze, which created an unseasonable chill in the air and caused some players to withdraw after round one, the weather turned out to be decent, with partly sunny skies and warmer conditions in the afternoon. This event would not have been possible if it were for the efforts of chief tournament organizer and director, USCF NM Suhas Kodali (NBCC president). He did an extraordinary job with all aspects of this tournament. Assisting Suhas in the TD booth was Bob Cyr. And assisting Suhas and Bob in the setup, cleanup, and overall logistics of the event were USCF NM David Herscovici, Roger Bessette, Gert Hilhorst, and Estee Axelrad. A taco truck was brought onsite for our hungry chess warriors. We also had side salads, fruits, tomatoes, cookies, cupcakes, chips, and beverages. Thanks to Suhas and his wife for bringing in the fruits and tomatoes. Thanks to David Mashkov and his mother for bringing in the cupcakes. And thanks to Estee for bringing in the salads. This event was divided into three sections, with the open section playing three rounds at G/60; d/5. The U1600 and scholastic sections played five rounds at G/25; d/5. After many hours of spirited play, we crowned a new chess champion of Planet Earth – Will Johnson, who amazingly was the only player to earn a perfect score in the open section out of thirty players. In the U1600 section, Ben Adelstein edged out Robbie Jay on tie-breaks. Lastly, in the scholastic section, Max Mashkov clinched first place with a perfect score, which was his first win in a major club event. Overall, it was a glorious day for chess and the NBCC family. And even though the weather could have cooperated better (hopefully, it will be warmer at the 2025 (60th) New Britain Chess Club Summer Open), the day was a success for the club. We look forward to next year's Planet Earth chess event at Wickham Park. Before I say goodbye, I want to say thanks to Tig Tillinghast, from Vermont, for taking very nice pictures, many of which are posted on the club website.

On the second meeting in June, the club held its annual business meeting. Twenty-eight members were present at this meeting, which lasted slightly over an hour. The following is a recap of the highlights at this meeting.

The minutes of the 2024 business meeting were reviewed and approved by the membership.

Club President USCF NM Suhas Kodali asked for one minute of silence for Bob Feder, Joe Hricko, Joseph Mansigian, and Chris Dearing, who recently passed away.

Historian's Report

- Bob Cyr reported on the major tournament highlights of 2025: Club Championship, the Winner's Keepers Chess Championship, the Planet Earth Chess Championship, and the Strazdins Cup – Stein.
- He noted the major increase in tournament participation in 2025.
- He explained the Grand Prix and Best Game of the Year contests.
- He mentioned about the card signings for David Fusco (who is recovering from surgery for thyroid cancer), Fred Townsend Jr. (CT chess legend who passed away last month), and Bob Feder (member who passed away last month from a courageous battle with cancer). Memorial tournaments will be held for Townsend and Feder later this year.

President's Report

- Suhas highlighted the vital role of all volunteers. Their help has elevated our club to a special place where members can enjoy a pleasant atmosphere to play chess.
- He gave special thanks to Justin Lalor, who could not continue as VP of the NBCC due to relocation.
- He expressed his gratitude to USCF NM David Herscovici, Roger Bessette, and Estee Axelrad for their help to open and close the club every Tuesday.
- He thanked the TDs who help to run the tournaments, with a special mention to Roger Bessette, who is taking on the role of TD coordinator.
- He highlighted the success of the NBCC Summer Open Championship and announced the return of the Planet Earth Chess Championship to Wickham Park.
- He mentioned the new initiative to hold Saturday game night events to increase the camaraderie among members.

Treasurer's Report

- David mentioned the positive change in the unrestricted net assets as a good sign for the financial health of the club. He particularly noted the very generous donations that our club received during the last year from the Dearing and Hricko families.
- He informed the members about the prompt rent payments until December 2025 to our landlord.
- FM Richard Bauer suggested he would search for options to see how the club can invest its cash surplus.

Officer Elections (September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026)

- The president, treasurer, and secretary were unanimously re-elected to their positions.
- A motion to nominate and elect David Fusco as our next vice president took place. He was voted in unanimously.
- Suhas gave a special thanks to exiting VP Justin Lalor for his valuable contributions to elevating our club to a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

New Business

- Rick mentioned about having help of a younger member to promote and use the capabilities of the Saturday online lichess.org study group.
- Bob mentioned about the possibility to host another GM for a simultaneous chess exhibition and a master class this year.
- FM Nelson Castaneda inquired about the possibility to have a second meeting for the club to meet during the week for tournaments.

For one week during the month, one of our newest and second-youngest lecturers in the club at age sixteen, Alexander Alvares-Filshtein "AJ," gave a nice presentation on chess puzzles. Some of them really stumped our audience. "AJ" is a very nice young man and is a very strong chess player. He really engaged his class and did a fine job with his lecture. We hope that he will continue to present more lectures in the future.

Many of our veteran members, like me, remember receiving *Chess Life* magazines in the mail from the United States Chess Federation. Many of these magazines today can be read online, thanks to the world of the internet. However, some people still like the feel and touch of a magazine in their hands. Recently, one of our former members, Gene Koenig, donated a box of *Chess Life* magazines to the club. This was greatly appreciated, and hopefully, someone out there will enjoy them.

Our next major event at the club was the 2025 NBCC Generations Championship. Like last year, players were grouped into sections based on age. The Play Time (18 or younger) section, though, was further divided into two groups: one for players rated U1400 and one for players rated at least 1400. The time control for the lower Play Time section was much faster than that of the upper section since most of the lower-rated kids play very fast. Both the Out of Time (50 or older) and the Play Time sections were well attended, but to the club's disappointment, the Prime Time (18 to 49) section did not represent well. Oh, well. This has been a trend lately in the club. We get the kids and the seniors but not the middle-agers. Overall, the tournament was a success, with slightly over forty players competing during this summer event. After three weeks of competition, the following players won their section: FM Richard Bauer (Out of Time), David Fusco (Prime Time), Jack Qian (Play Time – 1200+), and Pragyan Pandey (Play Time – U1400). Of note, this was David's and Jack's first win in a major club event.

JULY

The month of July was slated for two memorial events at the club, one for Bob Feder and one for Fred Townsend, both of whom passed away in May. Eulogies on both of these gentlemen are published later in this newsletter.

For the first memorial event, nearly forty players paid their respects to Bob Feder. Before the tournament, his closest friends, Mark Bourque and Dennis Himes, gave touching tributes to the life of Bob, who was a gentleman on and off the chess board. The blitz chess tournament was a spirited event, with many lively games. It was nice that we had three winners in this tournament: USCF NM David Herscovici, Jack Qian, and Lisa Smith.

For the second memorial event, close to fifty players paid their respects to Fred Townsend. USCF NM Suhas Kodali and Bob Cyr delivered nice tributes to Fred before his three-week quick chess tournament began. Fred was a Connecticut chess legend who inspired so many players for decades. His memorial on behalf of the NBCC saw players of all ages and skills in participation. Even though some of the scholastic players dominated the competition in this event, it was FM Nelson Castaneda, a longtime veteran of the club, who clinched first place with ten out of eleven wins.

AUGUST

Earlier this year, a group of four masters and experts from the club (FM Richard Bauer, Joe Bihlmeyer, FM Nelson Castaneda, and USCF NM Suhas Kodali) decided to organize a new lecture series about what makes each of them tick over the chess board. With the use of lichess.org, each lecturer presented their topic by reviewing games from the club and from prominent world chess players. The following were the topics that each presenter were assigned: Rick (The making and breaking of binds); Joe (Exploiting light and dark-squared weakness); Nelson (Gaining and utilizing the initiative); Suhas (Practicing prophylaxis). These lectures provided great value to the club, and we extend thanks to each presenter for the contributions to our members.

On the second to last Sunday in August, the club hosted its silver annual Summer Open Chess Championship at beautiful Wickham Park in Manchester. This tournament attracted seventy people from around the region, which was the second-highest turnout for this event and any event in club history. We thank everyone who participated in this incredible tournament. The day was fabulous for our family. The weather was pleasant, with seasonable temperatures and fair skies and just a touch of humidity. This grand event has become one of Connecticut's greatest summer social events of the year. It was a delight to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. Of course, a tournament of this size takes a lot of work to organize and coordinate. We owe an extreme debt of gratitude to USCF NM Sudas Kodali, who was the chief organizer and director, for doing such an outstanding job to ensure that this event ran so smoothly. We also owe thanks to Norman Burtness, who came in around the late morning to take over the directing duties and assist Suhas. That was so nice of Norman.

Of course, the Summer Open would not be a Summer Open without great the grilled barbeque lunch. Thanks to master chef, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, with help from Gert Hilhorst, Estee Axelrad, and Natalia Perekopskaya (David Mashkov's mom), for their work on the food committee. We had hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken and veggie burgers, various salads, fruit, chips, and a variety of desserts and refreshments. Lastly, we must thank Roger Bessette, USCF NM David Herscovici, and Bob Cyr for helping out with the setup-up and clean-up. The tournament was divided into three sections. We had many masters and experts, as well as scholastic players, many of whom have been dominating the chess scene lately. After a day of spirited competition, the winners of the 60th Summer Open were: Open section: Praharsh Varada, FM Nelson Castaneda, and David Mashkov; U1625 section: Adam Clough; Scholastic: Nihal Gowda. Medals were awarded to all players in the scholastic section and to players with at least a fifty percent or higher score in the upper sections. Thanks for being a part of this incredible chess experience, and we look forward to seeing you next year!

The club's final tournament of the summer season was its annual Summer Show-Up. Historically, this major event draws fewer players than other classical events in the club since many people are out of town on summer vacation. However, we still managed to attract forty-five participants, each of whom were paired against players of equivalent rating in each of the three rounds. There were only three players who earned perfect scores in this event. One of those players was FM Nelson Castaneda, who we congratulate for now earning fifty wins or ties for first place in major tournaments in the club. Talk about an amazing achievement for the professor emeritus!

SEPTEMBER

Since 2005, our big club has formed smaller groups of friends, many of whom have gotten together for parties and other social functions at each other's homes. On a glorious Saturday in September, USCF NM Suhas Kodali and his wife, Anitha, invited a group of close friends and club volunteers to their home in Plainville for an Indian lunch. It was meal filled with ethnic meat and vegetable dishes prepared by our host and hostess. The food was excellent, and everyone built up a huge appetite, including Gert Hilhorst, our club's travel expert, who drove his bike all the way from Simsbury. Besides chess, our friends engaged in other activities like table tennis and board games like Dixit and Power Grid. During lunch, Suhas made a major announcement that Anitha and he will be expectant parents in early 2026. Congratulations! We wish them all the best with their new arrival, and we thank them for their gracious hospitality.

The club's second-to-last major tournament of the year was its annual knockout and Swiss event. FM Nelson Castaneda was the event creator and chief organizer. Helping Nelson with entries on the computer was our newest and now youngest TD, Praharsh Varada, who is only thirteen years old! The rules for this event, as outlined by Nelson, were quite simple. Initially, all players were assigned numbers based on rating and were grouped into two sixteen player sections for pairing purposes. The first and all subsequent winners in each round of two knockout sections would advance until there was one champion. The losers in each round of each knockout section would be placed into an open Swiss system section. In case of a draw, there would be an Armageddon-style blitz playoff (with White getting one extra minute, but with Black getting draw odds). After three rounds of intense competition, FM Richard Bauer and Alexander Alvares-Filshtein were tied for first place in the knockout A section. Their game ended in a draw, so they had to play the playoff. "AJ" won the game. It should also be noted that, in addition to drawing or defeating three masters in this event, it was "AJ's" first major win in a classical tournament in the club. In the knockout B section, we had Senthil Paramasivan and Aryan Jangle vying for first place. After a good game by both players, Senthil emerged victorious.

NBCC MEMBERS' MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

The following major achievements were earned by our members at non-club tournaments and in the USCF in 2025.

USCF NM Jordan Groff drew GM Jianchao Zhou in the 2025 Boston Chess Congress held January 3 to 5.

FM Nelson Castaneda tied for first place in the 2025 New York State Senior Chess Championship held in Saratoga Springs from March 15 to 16.

FM Nelson Castaneda tied for first place in the 2025 Massachusetts Senior Open Chess Championship held in Marlborough on April 26 and 27. Nelson drew GM Alexander Ivanov in the tournament.

The following members won first place in their respective grade section in the 2025 Connecticut Scholastic Grade Chess Championships held in Manchester on May 10:

- Max Mashkov: 2nd grade prize
- Krystian Tkaczewski Jr.: 5th grade prize
- Jack Qian: 6th grade prize
- Praharsh Varada: 8th grade prize
- David Mashkov: 11th grade prize

Brian Dai took home fourth place in the Under Age 8 category in the 2025 North American Youth Chess Championship held in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, from August 17 to 23.

Praharsh Varada won the Top U2300 prize at the 2025 New England Open Chess Championship held in North Easton, MA, from August 30 to September 1.

NBCC MEMBER ATTAINING THE LEVEL OF USCF EXPERT

Praharsh Varada (age 13) attained the level of USCF expert in 2025.

NBCC PICTURE GALLERY

The following photos were taken by David Fusco, Estee Axelrad, Agnieszka Tkaczewski, Tig Tillinghast, Himabindu Varada, and Bob Cyr.

WORLD AMATEUR TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2025



Mike Pascetta, Ben Fields, Ian Wohlhieter, Richard Bauer, and David Fusco

NBCC CHAMPIONS OF 2025 **(WITH TDS MARK BOURQUE AND ROGER BESSETTE)**



Mark Bourque, Ben Fields, Joe Miglizzi, Praharsh Varada (a bit hidden), Sumanyu Nandecha, Ian Stoklasek, Suhas Kodali, Brian Dai, Jordan Groff, Jithya Sajeevan, David Mashkov, Alexander Alvares-Filshtein "AJ", Ryan Leef, Ben Adelstein, Nabeel Chasmawala, Senthil Paramasivan, and Roger Bessette

JOINT SIMULTANEOUS CHESS EXHIBITION OF 2025
BY SUHAS KODALI AND JORDAN GROFF



PLANET EARTH CHESS CHAMPIONS (WITH DIRECTORS) OF 2025

OPEN SECTION



Calliste Herve-Mignucci, Bob Cyr, David Mashkov, Will Johnson, Suhas Kodali, and Luis Baez
Krystian Tkaczewski Jr. (in front)

UNDER 1600 SECTION



Dan Knowles, Ben Adelstein, Pragyan Pandey, Aadvik Gudipati, Mark Stucky, Suhas Kodali, Bob Cyr, and William Adamson

SCHOLASTIC SECTION



Ariel Touvian, Max Mashkov, Mahanth Chede, Bhanutej Gottam, Daniel Emmanuel, Rishaan Negi, Anvi Jayashankar, Suhas Kodali, and Bob Cyr

STRAZDINS CUP – STEIN CHAMPIONS OF 2025
(WITH PRESIDENT SUHAS KODALI AND TDS)



Suhas Kodali, David Mashkov, Mahanth Chede, Joe Bihlmeyer, Luca Festa, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, Luis Baez, Dan Knowles, Krystian Tkaczewski Jr., Dennis Himes, Bob Cyr, and Senthil Paramasivan

NBCC GENERATIONS CHAMPIONS OF 2025



Arya Shah, Ben Adelstein, Jack Qian, Doug Fiske, Aayush Negi, Joe Bihlmeyer, David Fusco, Bob Cyr, Nelson Castaneda, and Roger Bessette

NBCC SUMMER OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONS OF 2025
(WITH TDS SUHAS KODALI, NORMAN BURTNES, AND BOB CYR)

OPEN SECTION



Norman Burtness, Nelson Castaneda, Luca Festa, Praharsh Varada,
David Mashkov, Suhas Kodali, and Nikita Fomichev

UNDER 1625 SECTION



Bob Cyr, Mark Krechet, William Adamson, Norman Burtness, Nathan Mezheritskiy,
Kapish Kishore, Adam Clough, and Drew Hetherington

SCHOLASTIC SECTION



Bob Cyr, Nibha Gowda, Nihal Gowda, Norman Burtness, Sean Nham,
Mahanth Chede, Owen Guggina, and Max Mashkov



Stephen Ciulla (son) vs. Turner Tillinghast Richard Bauer vs. Stephen Ciulla (father)



Mario Guevara-Rodriguez fires up the grill!

THE PASSING OF BOB FEDER

It is with a sad and heavy heart to inform you that Robert “Bob” Feder, one of our club members, passed away on May 17 at the age of sixty-eight after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Bob enjoyed playing chess with his friends at the club. He enjoyed participating in a variety of tournaments held by the club. Bob was a man of great integrity and was always in good spirits. Prior to joining our family in 2019, Bob played at the University of Connecticut Chess Club and in chess tournaments in eastern Connecticut. Bob was a player of amateur stature, with his chess rating peaking at almost 1600.

Despite his illness, Bob told me that he was going to play chess for as long as he could. He truly was a trooper. The last major club event that he played in was the Bourque-Festa-Fields Chess Championship.

Beyond chess, Bob enjoyed playing his harmonica and loved backgammon. He was also actively involved in his church.

Bob was a friend to many of our members in the club and will be dearly missed by all. May he rest in peace in heaven for all eternity.



MEMORIALIZING FREDERICK TOWNSEND JR.

It is with profound sorrow to pass along news to the Connecticut chess community about the death of one of its greatest advocates, ambassadors, and contributors, Frederick “Fred” Townsend Jr. I found out about Fred’s passing from his daughter, Carolyn, who said that her father died peacefully on May 9 at the age of eighty-eight.



Fred had one of the most impressive and extensive resumes as a leader in Connecticut chess since the 1960s. Most notably, he served as Connecticut State Chess Association president at various times in the 1970s and early 1980s and for a few years around the turn of the century. As a staunch supporter of scholastic chess, Fred organized and directed hundreds of tournaments in Hartford (our state’s capital) for Connecticut’s chess youths. Mr. Townsend also ran many adult tournaments, including the annual Townsend Cup, which was a chess event held in his honor. During his tenure as a tournament director, Fred rose to the level of NTD (National Tournament Director) – the only person to hold this distinguished title in Connecticut chess history.

Beyond Connecticut chess, Mr. Townsend served as the United States Chess Federation’s vice president circa 1972 to 1974. And, of utmost historical significance, Fred was involved in the negotiations of the 1975 Fischer vs. Karpov World Chess Championship match.

Fred called the New Britain Chess Club his home between the 1970s and the 1990s. And, like Arkadijs Strazdins did at the club level, Fred took on varied roles at the state level. I had the utmost pleasure of meeting Mr. Townsend a few times. During our last visit about eight years ago, I went to his place of business in Wolcott to pick up boxes of archives from the CSCA, some dated as early as the 1930s, and many of which are posted on the CSCA website. Fred was very passionate about chess history in our state. You could say that he was the pioneer of Connecticut chess history. Fred was also an avid writer and publisher of chess articles during his years of steadfast service to Connecticut chess.

Fred worked tirelessly for the betterment of Connecticut chess. His efforts paved the way for future generations of leaders. He was truly someone to emulate and was an inspiration to all chess players. Mr. Townsend was a statesperson in the highest regard. As a major contributor to Connecticut chess, I speak for the entire Connecticut community when I say that we owe Mr. Townsend a debt of gratitude for what he has accomplished for so long and for so many.

Let us remember and reflect on the glory of this legendary man. May Fred’s spirit remain in all of us, and may he rest in God’s hands in heaven for all eternity.