

02Nov2021

After Action Report, 82nd SC Championships, 30-31 October 2021

Greetings, South Carolina Chess Mongers!

The 82nd SC Championships tournament is in the books, in which we enjoyed the largest attendance in recent memory: 86 pre-registered, and another 25 joined in on-site! (That's 111 in all) We saw several old friends take up competition after years away from the game, and 35 players have very new USCF IDs in the "30 million" series – welcome to the tactile tactics of over-the-board play, new friends! Eighty-two Palmetto State residents competed, and nineteen from North Carolina, five Georgians, two Tennesseans, and one each from Florida, North Dakota, and Utah! So far does our drawing power reach!

Clear winner among the twenty-six in the Open Section with 4.5 points is the defending SC state champion, now repeating state champion, IM Dr. Alexander Matros! Close behind at 4-1 were Pradhy Kathapolli (NC) and Mark Ishee (TN). Sharing third through 6th places were Jacob Stoll (SC), Ms. Uthra Pakkirisamy (SC), and William Bowman (FL)!

Meanwhile among the twenty-five contenders in the Under-1800 group, Krishna Rallabandi (NC) and Grayson Cooke (GA) shared top honors with 4.5 each in first and second places, followed by Shravan Dash (NC) in clear third. Bhavin Sanghani missed out on the money, but his 3.5 points did share fourth and fifth places, and he took the trophy as South Carolina's Under-1800 Champion!

Ishan Patel is South Carolina's Under 1400 Champion, and he shared first and second places with young Zoey Moore (NC). Zoey took a last-round bye and wore her costume for an early start on Halloween, and her 4-0 trick-or-treating run through two days proved she plays frighteningly well at the chess board! Minello Reed (SC), Cain King (SC), Chalpa Gundumalla (NC), Laurence Zhang (SC) all scored 4-1 to share third through sixth places among thirty-five contenders!

The one-day Amateur Section attracted twenty-five competitors! First and second place trophies went by tiebreaks to Hugo Defever (SC) and Eduar Murillo (SC), each with 4-0. Ruth Hinchman (TN) took the third trophy on tiebreaks with 3-1, tied with Will Snyder (SC), Mark Ritchie (SC), Tanay Sanghani (SC), Jacob Goddard (SC), and Alexander Fisher (SC)!

A generous anonymous donor subsidized a Brilliancy/Upset Prize in memory of the late Senior Life Master Klaus Pohl. This went in part to Erik Walker (1946, GA) for his Round Two victory over past SC Champion Mike Sailer (2233), surmounting a ratings difference of 287 points in the Open Section. In the U1800 group, a very young Vihaan Purohit (1349, NC) defeated John Yates (1746, SC) in Round Four. Vihaan's Round One victory (245 points difference) would also have won the prize, so the young man definitely punches above his weight.

The annual business meeting saw the re-election of David Grimaud, Gene Nix, and Cornell White as President, Treasurer, and Secretary, respectively, and the new election of James MacDougall as Vice President of SCCA. Dr. John McCrary, past USCF Executive Director, over saw the elections, which also included David Grimaud and Gene Nix as SC delegates to USCF. We recognized the service of out-going Vice President Dan Smith for his decade of work for SC and Columbia chess. We also recognized Dean Creech of Greenville for his early and continuing work in providing online chess activities with tournaments and 4H Chess Club meetings for younger players! Thanks Dan and Dean!

Two months ago we weren't very certain of filling half the playing hall. Three days before, we needed more room for the pre-registered folks. Then twenty-five more joined in at the door Saturday morning! For their unsparing generous volunteered support in wrangling this enthusiastic horde, warmest thanks are due to Drew Plyler for directing the Amateur Section, and to Aniruddha Agnihotri for assisting in the same and with the U1400 group. James Brandmair of the Columbia Chess Club, formerly the Irmo CC, assisted with floor management and the invaluable loan of chess clocks and sets, without which the weekend would have proven much more difficult. Liza Bajarias assisted with signage and the posting of pairings, announcement and results. Thank you! Cornell White, David Blair, and Mike Moore helped supervise the playing halls. Legendary South Carolina tournament director Don Lemaster visited both days, lending considerable gravitas to the supervision of events. David Acosta of ThinkMove Chess Academy provided the online registration facility, and Drew Plyler posted the advanced entries at the SCCA site! And finally as ever, David & Maureen Grimaud played many roles in supporting, advancing, and carrying through this tournament!

Thanks to Matthew Lamb of Hilton Garden Inn for expediting the short-notice add-on, and to all of the HGI staff for their prompt and responsive service on site!