

Second Annual Lewistown Scholastic Chess Tournament - October 22nd, 2016

Last year at this time 22 students from Browning, Billings and Lewistown met in the Lewistown Junior High School Auditorium for the First Annual Lewistown Scholastic Chess Tournament. Mark Poore from Billings won that event. For the Second Annual Lewistown Scholastic, held last Saturday the 22nd of October, 30 chess aficionados from the age of 5 up to 16 competed - some travelled to the Lewistown Junior High School from as far away as Missoula, Ashland, Billings, and Winifred to compete against the youth of Lewistown. This year's overall winner was 13-year-old Christian Fink of Billings. Christian won every match he played!

The field was divided into four age sections: Under 7, 7-10, 11-14, and 15-18. Only one participant was under 7 years of age. Maya Thackeray (5) managed to sit through 5 full games, "more than 5 times the chess she's ever played in one day" according to her father and tournament director, Brett Thackeray. She even scored a point and a half for winning one match and drawing another. "So naturally, we had to give her a trophy."

The normal scoring for a chess tournament is that a player receives zero points for a loss, half a point for a draw, and one point for a win. The Lewistown Scholastic consists of five rounds and therefore five matches for each participant.

In the 7-10 year-old section first place went to D'Andra Two Moons (10) from Ashland with a 4 points. There was a tie at second place with 2.5 points between Owen Day (10) of Lewistown and Carlynn Standing Elk (10) of Ashland. A "coin toss" determined that Carlynn would get the second-place trophy while Owen took the third-place hardware home.

The two younger age sections played a round-robin format together since the under 7 had only one player. Tournament Director Brett Thackeray inadvertently listed Nathan Blackadar (11) of Lewistown as a 10 year-old and pitted him against the younger opponents. According to Thackeray, "Nathan played very well accumulating 4 points and not losing any matches, but since I had placed him in the wrong section for his age I didn't think it appropriate for him to take a trophy. I decided to reward Nathan with a new chess set for my error and his good sportsmanship. I publicly offer my sincerest apology to Nathan. I'll never again forget how old he is!"

The 11-14 year-old section was by far the most competitive with 21 of the 30 players vying for those trophies. Undefeated Christian Fink (13) of Billings solidly won first-place, while Colton Quirk of Missoula took second being dealt his only loss by the champion himself in the fifth and final match. Cialeo Smith (13) of Lewistown grabbed the third-place trophy with 3.5 points - suffering a loss to Mr. Quirk and a draw with Silas Watson (15) of Lewistown.

The 15-18 year-old section saw last year's champ in the lead - Mark Poore (16) of Billings won with 4 points (losing to Mr. Quirk), Silas Watson (15) of Lewistown came in second with 3.5 points (a loss to Mr. Poore and a draw with Mr. Smith), and the third-place trophy went home with Megan Honeycutt (15) of Lewistown - a welcome new-comer to tournament chess.

Other players include, from Lewistown - Easton Cattaneo (8), Gunnar Thomas (11), Remington Cattaneo (11), Alec Fraser (12), Ashton Moseman (12), Chrissy Carlson (12), Alex Honeycutt (13), Daniel Thackeray (13), James Aldrich (13), Sebastian Battrick (13), Levi Boyles (14), Timothy Snyder (14); from Winifred - Ethan Carlstrom (11), Zander Wichman (12); from Billings - Sam Rollins (12); and from Ashland - Chanzlee Whistling Elk (11), Katie Medicine Bull (11), Jerry Thex (11), and Kylin Medicine Bull (12).

All the participants took home mementos and a chess-themed door prize ranging from coffee mugs, to shirts, to chess pieces. Pizza was shared by most during the lunch break. On behalf of all the participants, Thackeray would like to thank McDonald's of Lewistown for providing punch and Pizza Hut of Lewistown for donating pizzas.

"I was extremely pleased with the turnout and the sportsmanship demonstrated by all the players." said Thackeray. "I hope that next year we can grow the event to double the number of competitors we had this year." "In addition," Thackeray added, "the event would not have been so successful without the support of all the parents, coaches, and judges that contributed their time and money to transport players and make this event possible. A big thank you to Doug Hansen of Helena and Bill Greer of Ashland for helping to officiate the tournament!"

The Third Annual Lewistown Scholastic Chess Tournament is slated for October 14th, 2017. Information about participating or sponsoring can be found by calling Brett Thackeray, the tournament director, at 350-0170. Mark your calendar and sharpen your skills on the game board! Good luck to all, and play well.