



Montana Chess Association

September 2019

Newsletter

2019 Montana State Champion Dorje McPherron

Congratulations to Dorje McPherron for becoming the new Montana state champion! In a very tough round-robin tournament featuring Montana's six strongest players, Dorje accumulated 4 points out of 5 with 3 wins, 2 draws, and 0 losses. Fellow Missoulian Wilton Strickland took second place by scoring 3.5 points with 2 wins, 3 draws, and 0 losses. Dorje and Wilton were the only players not to lose a game.

The Decisive Match:

McPherron seals the title against Skovron

1.Nf3, d5 2.d4, Nf6 3. Bf4, c5 4.e3, Nc6 5.c3, cxd4 6.exd4, Bg4 7.Be2, e6 8.Nbd2, Bd6 9.Bxd6, Qxd6 10.h3, Bh5 11.Ne5, Nxe5 12.dxe5, Qxe5 13.g4, Bg6 14.Qa4+, Nd7 15.Nf3, Qe4 16.Qd4, O-O 17.Rd1, Rfd8 18.Qd2, Ne5 19.Qe3, Nxf3+ 20. Qxf3, Qa4 21.Bd3, Qxa2 22. O-O, Bxd3 +- 23. Qxd3, Qc4 24.Qe3, b5 25. Rd4, Qc5 26.Rfd1, a5 27. Rc1, a4 28.Qe2, a3 29.b4, Qc6 30. Qa2, e5 31. Rdd1, Qc4 32.Rc2, Qxa2 33.Rxa2, d4 34. cxd4, Rxd4 35. Rxd4, exd4 36.Kf1, Kf8 37.Ke2, Ra4 38. Kd3, Rxb4 39. Rxa3, Ke7 40. Ra6, g5 41. Ke4, f6 42. Ra7+, Ke6 43. Ra6+, Kf7-+ 44. Kf5, d3 45.Ra2, Rf4#



The top six tournament players in Montana pose for a group photo between rounds. From left to right is David Duke, Dorje McPherron, Richard Hobbs, James Skovron, Wilton Strickland, and Dustin Sneed.

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Montana Closed Final Results

| | Player | Rating | Post | Rd 1 | Rd 2 | Rd 3 | Rd 4 | Rd 5 | Total |
|---|-------------------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1 | Dorje McPherron | 2008 | 2031 | D2 | W6 | W4 | D5 | W3 | 4.0 |
| 2 | Wilton Strickland | 1873 | 1911 | D1 | D3 | W5 | D6 | W4 | 3.5 |
| 3 | Jim Skovron | 1819 | 1857 | D5 | D2 | W6 | W4 | L1 | 3.0 |
| 4 | Richard Hobbs | 1950 | 1930 | W6 | W5 | L1 | L3 | L2 | 2.0 |
| 5 | David Duke | 1867 | 1851 | D3 | L | L2 | D1 | D6 | 1.5 |
| 6 | Dustin Sneed | 1972 | 1893 | L4 | L1 | L3 | D2 | D5 | 1.0 |

Montana Chess Clubs

Billings Chess Club

Location: Starbucks at 9th and Grand (Thursdays 7PM)
Location: Thirsty Street 3008 1st Ave North (Wed 8PM)
Info: All skill levels welcome; No fee; bring clocks if wish

Bozeman Chess Club

Location: Bozeman Public Library
Time: Thursday 5:30—8PM
Info: No fees, All skill levels welcome, boards and pieces available, brings clocks if you wish
Note: Kids chess club at the library Thursday Afternoons

Butte Chess Club

Location: Butte-Silver Bow Public Library
Time: Fridays 2 PM
Info: All skill levels welcome; No fees; Equipment provided (or bring your own)

Glacier Chess Club (Flathead Valley)

Location: Flathead Valley Community College – Eagle’s Nest Cafe
Time: Most Tuesdays, 5-7 PM
Info: All skill levels welcome; No fees

Helena Chess Club

Location: Lewis and Clark County Library
Time: Thursday 6 – 9 PM

Lewiston Chess Club

Location: Calvert Hotel
Time: Thursday 5—8PM
Info: No fees, everyone is welcome, all ages and abilities



University-Community Chess Club (Missoula)

Location: Room 235, Liberal Arts Building , UM
Time: Thursdays Arrive around 6:45pm, clocks start at 7:00pm, 3 rated games per month, occasional blitz

MCA Board Members

- Kevin Kuehnel—President
- Wilton Strickland—Executive V.P.
- Mike Muller—Western V.P.
- Dan Mattson—Eastern V.P.
- Scott Caldwell—Secretary/Treasurer

Contact the Board or a Club:

<http://www.montanachess.org/mca-board/>

Newsletter Feedback?

eric.m.walthall@gmail.com



St. Patrick’s Open Report

The inaugural 2019 St. Patrick Open left a few feeling the luck o’ the Irish, and others green with envy! The event was held in Billings, MT 3/16-17 at the Mary Alice Fortin Room of the Billings Clinic. The top prize was shared amongst Tim Schoessler (WY), Jim Skovron (Great Falls), and newcomer Dustin Sneed (Billings) with 4 points apiece. Thomas Walthall (Missoula), Brandon Bedenbender (Great Falls), and Michael Troyer shared the lower division prize with 2.5 points apiece. Thomas also scored the biggest upset prize by scoring a win over Scott Caldwell (Missoula) with a 657-point spread. He won with white in a Sozin/Sicilian in which he created a passed d-pawn and marched it to the 7th rank, only to see black give away a rook but there wasn’t much left to do.

As the top seed, Tim had the toughest road to hoe, facing no opponent under 1670. He did not disappoint, winning all 3 rounds Saturday and drawing the final round against Jim after a 4th round bye, resulting in a 2074 performance rating. Jim also had 3 wins, a bye, and a draw. Dustin, though provisionally rated, continues to score well against Class A-B players beating David Duke and Charlie Wittnam, with his only loss coming at the hands of Tim. Tim would not admit revenge but it must have felt good after a bitter defeat to Dustin in January!

Though our state champion is so often in the driver’s seat, Duke also cemented his reputation of being a very slippery defender. He withstood intense pressure from Michael Muller with 2 seconds left to secure the win in Rd 4. He also held the draw against Ben Vogel with 5 seconds remaining on his clock in Rd 3, despite an aired-out king in an awkward position on the queenside (with black). He only fell out of contention by losing to Dustin in Rd 5, a game he probably should have won.

There were many more exciting moments that could be commented on if one had the time and space. All in all, it was a fun and successful tournament with 22 players (3 juniors), in a great venue. The room had the bonus of a big screen for standings/pairings projection, as well as an elevated stage to honor our Board 1 players.

| Pair Num | Player Name USCF ID / Rtg (Pre->Post) | Total Pts | Round | | | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|-------|------|------|-----|------|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 1 | TIMOTHY ADAM SCHOESSLER WY 12708614 / R: 1951 ->1968 | 4.0 | W | 12 W | 10 W | 2 H | D | 3 |
| | | | W | B | W | | W | |
| 2 | DUSTIN SNEEDEN MT 16913327 / R: 1924P4 ->1961P9 | 4.0 | W | 21 W | 11 L | 1 W | 10 W | 5 |
| | | | B | W | B | W | B | |
| 3 | JAMES J SKOVRON MT 12347620 / R: 1770 ->1801 | 4.0 | W | 20 W | 16 H | W | 6 D | 1 |
| | | | W | B | | W | B | |
| 4 | BENJAMIN VOGEL MD 13621624 / R: 1840 ->1828 | 3.5 | L | 16 W | 17 D | 5 W | 13 W | 7 |
| | | | W | B | W | B | W | |

The 84th Montana Open

The 84th Montana Open in Bozeman was a huge success! Over forty players of all different skill levels competed, and many of them came from faraway places such as Washington, Idaho, North Dakota, Wyoming, and even New York. The top seed was expert Josep Pagerols, who currently resides in Wyoming but hails from Spain.

Despite the intense competition from at home and abroad, Richard Hobbs of Montana took first place with an impressive 4.5 points out of five. Richard had been in chess retirement for many years before returning to the scene just last year, and we are grateful to have him back.

Congratulations are also in order for Christian Fink, a young man who pulled off two major upsets against experienced opponents Michael Muller and Sherwood Moore, whose ratings outstripped his by over 500 points!

Another young player who scored some impressive upsets is Thomas Walthall, who defeated former state champion Michael Jensen (whose rating was almost 500 points higher) and Dr. Charles Wittnam (rating was more than 300 points higher).



The 84th Montana Open at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel (Bozeman West)

2018-2019 Montana Grand Prix Final Standings

| Player | Total | BIG SKY COUNTRY | CHINOOK OPEN | TURKEY OPEN | JANUARY THAW | ST. PATRICK OPEN | MONTANA OPEN |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| JAMES J SKOVRON | 54.13 | <u>7.88</u> | <u>7.52</u> | <u>5.97</u> | <u>14.01</u> | <u>15.18</u> | <u>3.57</u> |
| RICHARD PARKER HOBBS | 44.94 | | <u>12.48</u> | <u>10.93</u> | | | <u>21.53</u> |
| SCOTT CALDWELL | 41.18 | <u>6.32</u> | <u>12.48</u> | <u>8.22</u> | | <u>10.59</u> | <u>3.57</u> |
| DANIEL R MATTSON | 36.95 | <u>15.77</u> | | <u>7.19</u> | <u>13.99</u> | | |
| DARREN STACEY | 36.67 | <u>10.11</u> | <u>6.67</u> | <u>4.78</u> | <u>6.32</u> | <u>8.79</u> | |
| WILTON STRICKLAND | 31.94 | | | <u>8.22</u> | <u>11.21</u> | | <u>12.51</u> |
| DORJE RAYMOND MCPHERRON | 25.46 | | | <u>10.27</u> | | | <u>15.19</u> |
| JOSHUA BROWN | 24.52 | <u>7.88</u> | <u>16.64</u> | | | | |
| DUSTIN SNEEDEN | 24.33 | | | | | <u>9.14</u> | <u>15.19</u> |
| DAVID DUKE | 20.63 | | <u>12.48</u> | | | <u>5.29</u> | <u>2.86</u> |
| MICHAEL MULLER | 19.33 | | | <u>5.97</u> | <u>11.21</u> | | <u>2.15</u> |
| JESSE DRISCOLL | 13.70 | <u>10.11</u> | | <u>3.59</u> | | | |
| BENJAMIN VOGEL | 12.39 | | | | | <u>10.24</u> | <u>2.15</u> |
| DANIEL MCCOURT | 10.59 | | | | | <u>10.59</u> | |
| DEAN D DRAKE | 10.11 | <u>10.11</u> | | | | | |
| CHRISTIAN PAUL FINK | 7.19 | | | <u>7.19</u> | | | |
| ANDREW RATH | 2.86 | | | | | | <u>2.86</u> |
| LEONARDO CALLE | 2.15 | | | | | | <u>2.15</u> |
| HANS MAZUR | 2.15 | | | | | | <u>2.15</u> |
| JAMES R LOY | 2.15 | | | | | | <u>2.15</u> |

For scores and calculations for the 2018-2019 Montana Grand Prix visit:

http://www.montanachess.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Grand_prix_season_2018-07-01.pdf

2019-2020 Schedule

Big Sky Country Open

September 7-8

Finlen Hotel, Butte

Turkey Open

November 2-3

Best Western Grant Creek, Missoula

Eastern Washington Open Non-MCA

September 28-29

Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA

January Thaw

January TBD

Location TBD, Helena

Chinook Open

October 19-20

Holiday Inn, Great Falls

St. Patrick's Open

March 21-22

Location TBD, Billings

85th Montana Open

April TBD

Location TBD, Great Falls



Will you make the top 6 and the 2020 Montana Closed?

2020 Montana Closed State Champion Tournament

Date/Location TBD

The players who qualify are:

- Last years State Champion
- Top two from 2019-2020 Grand Prix
- Top three from 2020 Montana Open

For more information see the MCA Constitution on our website.

MONTANA CHESS ASSOCIATION

The Montana Chess Association is the State Chapter Affiliate of the United States Chess Federation. MCA promotes events, education and general interest in chess.



Home Montana Champions 2019 Grand Prix Tournament Results Clubs History & Newsletters Contact the MCA Games

MCA Tournament History

- MT Closed Origins 1978-1984
- MCA State Tournament Summary 1973
- MCA Tournament Rules 1973
- 1966-1989 Montana Chess Champions Plaque
- 1935 - 1973 MCA State Open Winners & Runners-up
- 1935 - 1973 MCA Record of State Tournaments
- 1935 - 1973 MCA Officers

Championship Games

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Champions

History

Montana Chess History is now online! MT Champions—Open & Closed, Newsletters, and Documents from 1935 to Present.

National Tournament Reports



Richard Hobbs earns a draw against NM Wilson Gibbins, the Minnesota Champion

Tournament of Senior Champions

Richard Hobbs, our highest USCF rated senior, travelled to Orlando, Florida to represent Montana at the USCF National Tournament of Senior Champions which takes place simultaneously with the U.S. Open. Richard performed exceptionally well against a very talented field scoring one win, one loss, and four draws earning himself a tie for 18th place in a field that included 25 players with various Master level titles. Well done Richard!!!

2019 National Open

In early June three members of the Montana Chess Association travelled to the Las Vegas International Chess Festival to compete in the National Open and side events. All three players had a great time and highly encourage their fellow Montana Chess members to make the trip next year to Vegas. Both Scott Caldwell and Thomas Walthall left satisfied with their performance, but agreed they left some points on the table.

Montana's highlight of the tournament was Scott Caldwell pulling off an upset over Allen Cunningham, who you might know from the ESPN World Series of Poker. Scott competed in the U-1900 division and brought home 3.0 points from six matches following a first round bye.

Thomas Walthall competed in the U-1500 division and managed 4.0 points from seven matches. Scoring two wins and four draws finishing in 19th place out of 75 competitors. The points were a huge relief for Thomas who took 0.0 points from six matches in the Barber Tournament of K-8 State Champions in the summer of

2018.

Young Joshua Walthall took 2.0 points from five rounds with two wins in the Youth Trophy Tournament, both over competitors from California. Joshua stuck around to play WGM Jennifer Shahade in a Simultaneous Exhibition. Lasting seven moves against the Grand Master.



Joshua Walthall takes on WGM Jennifer Shahade, two time U.S. Women's Champion

Scott's Win over Allen Cunningham (CA)

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 O-O 6. Be3 e5 7. Nge2 Nc6 8. Qd2 Ne8 9. O-O-O f5 10. dxe5 Nxe5 11. f4 Ng4 12. Bd4 Be6 13. Bxg7 Nxg7 14. Nd4 Bf7 15. h3 Nf6 16. exf5 Nxf5 17. g4 Ng3 18. Rh2 Nxf1 19. Rxf1 Bxc4 20. Rg1 c5 21. Nf3 Re8 22. f5 Qe7 23. Re1 Qf8 24. fxe6 Rxe1+ 25. Nxe1 hxe6 26. Rf2 Qe7 27. Nc2 Ne4 28. Nxe4 Qxe4 29. b3 Bd3 30. Rf4 Qe2 31. Qxe2 Bxe2 32. Rf6 Kg7 33. Rxd6 Kh6 34. Kd2 Re8 35. Ne3 Bf3 36. h4 Re7 37. Nf5+ 1-0

Start Planning Ahead!

2020 U.S. Open

Denker, Barber, Senior, and Girls Tournaments

St. Charles, Missouri

August 8-16, 2020

2020 National Open

at the Las Vegas International Chess Festival

June 24-28: 2020

Scholastic Update



Walthall and Fink at 2018 Denker and Barber (Madison, WI)

Fink and Walthall Repeat as Denker HS and Barber K-8 Tournament of Champion Nominees

Christian Fink (right) finished the 2018-2019 season as the highest rated High School player in Montana, rising 204 points to end the season rated 1283. Christian's biggest win came over Jim Skovron in the Turkey Open, an upset that earned him the biggest upset of the tournament. Thomas Walthall (left) started the season rated 808 and shot all the way up to 1478, earning his U.S. Chess 4th Category title along the way. Thomas's biggest win of the year came over Michael Jenson in the Montana Open. Christian of Billings Central, Thomas of Loyola, and Colton Quirk of Hellgate are the early favorites for next year's Denker qualification. Who from our K-8 players will step up into the rated tournaments to challenge for the Barber next season?

2020 National Tournament Qualification

The 2019-2020 Denker High School State Champion, Barber K-8 State Champion, and K-12 Haring Girls State Champion invitations will be based on USCF rating. Do you want to be the Montana Champion? Are you ready to give rated chess a try? Come out and try a rated tournament. See the MCA Website for more details.

Players to Watch

Paul Harmon (left), a 4th Grader from Helena, stormed onto the Montana Chess scene at the Montana Scholastic Open in Bozeman winning the 4th-5th Grade division on a clean 5.0 points. He followed it up with another 5.0 performance in the 6th-8th Grade division of the MIS Spring Classic. Any early favorite for the K-8 State Champion in 2019-2020? Pierce Coulter (right), well known to the Missoula bakery chess crowd, won multiple K-3rd grade tournament divisions this year starting four wins and two draws at the Stevensville Classic. There must be something in Bernice's famous Montana shaped sugar cookies.



Paul Harmon and Pierce Coulter

2018-2019 Scholastic Tournament Winners

MIS Fall Scholastic

HS: Thomas Walthall; 6th-8th: Daniel Braun; 4th-5th: Jack Edwards, Bayln Hess and Rio Thelen; K-3rd: Vahn Thelen

Big Sky Country Open Scholastic (USCF Rated)

Thomas Walthall

Stevensville Scholastic

HS: Thomas Walthall; 6-8th: Rebecca Dean; 4th-5th: Jack Edwards; K-3rd: Pierce Coulter

Montana Open Scholastic

6-8th: Rebecca Dean, Clara Harmon, and Alex Magula; 3-5th: Paul Harmon; K-3rd: Jack Dudas, Sam Harmon, and Pierce Coulter

MIS Spring Scholastic

HS: Colton Quirk; 6-8th: Paul Harmon; 4th-5th: Joshua Walthall and Symon Cooper; K-3rd: P. Coulter and S. Harmon

2019-2020 Scholastic Tournaments

Billings Scholastic

September 27 Location: Billings Boys & Girls Club

Helena/Montana City Scholastic

September 28, Montana City Fire Department, 10:30AM

Missoula Fall Scholastic

November 16, Missoula Intl School, Time TBD

Bozeman Fall Scholastic

November 23, Bozeman Library

St. Patrick's Open (USCF/MCA Membership Required)

March 21-22, Location TBD Billings

Stevensville Scholastic

March 14, Stevensville Schools Multi-Purpose Building

Montana Open K-8 Scholastic (USCF/MCA Required)

Date/Location TBD pending location availability

Missoula Spring Scholastic

May 16, Missoula International School

Follow the MCA Website and Facebook for details