

2010 National Capital Open

The National Capital Open is normally held near the end of November, as close as feasible to the American Thanksgiving long weekend. The idea is that due to that holiday, some players have relatively slower work days that week, and find it easier to play that weekend. As long as the travelling weather is decent, these factors normally combine to make the National Capital Open the second biggest event in the EOCA Grand Prix, after the Eastern Ontario Open, which annually culminates the EOCA Grand Prix in early summer. This year however, due to conflicts with other renting organizations, we had to settle for facilities at the RA Centre earlier in November than usual, and perhaps that contributed to almost a dozen players deciding at the last minute to defer their registrations to my next tournament in Ottawa. However, registrations had been strong enough, that we still ended up with 63 players and a total prize fund of \$2500. We also decided to stay with the 5 separate sections that we had planned for, resulting in awesomely tight rounds all weekend! :)

There was concern at first that the smaller sections would be tougher to pair in the later rounds, but using FIDE pairing rules, which place more emphasis on due colour than do legacy CFC pairing rules, really seemed to facilitate pairing even smaller sections. Only the 2nd round took a little bit more effort! ;)

The Top Section, rated both CFC and FIDE, was restricted to players rated at least 2200, where a third of the players were titled! The star players included International Masters David Cummings, Brian Hartman, Tom O'Donnell, and Canada's newest International Grandmaster, Bator Sambuev. All of these fine players were introduced before the 1st round to nice applause, and it was wonderful to see people rise to their feet for an extended recognition of Bator! :)

The rest of the weekend served to confirm that recognition of the GM as the best player in the room! Mr.Sambuev just cruised through all of his opposition, including two IMs, to score a perfect 5-0, win the \$500 1st place prize, and if our calculations are correct, jump over the 2700 rating level! Congrats! So dominating was this performance, that 2nd place was 1.5 points away at 3.5-1.5! Mr.O'Donnell, who is always wonderfully pleasant, was very consistent in working his way towards that score, and winning the \$300 2nd place prize. Rounding out the Top Section, scoring 3-2 was enough for a share of the \$200 3rd place prize, which was reached by three players who are very tough to play against: IM Brian Hartman, Nikita Kraiouchkine, and Alexandre Levkovsky.

Like the Top Section, the U2200 Section is also being rated both CFC and FIDE. It was one of the smallest sections this weekend, but in recognition of the impressive ability and experience of the players, \$500 in prizes were assigned to this section. Several players had a shot at winning, and they were not decided until the last game of the tournament! After the smoke had cleared, David Filipovich and William

Doubleday both scored 3.5-1.5 for \$250 each.

As the biggest section among those covering only a 200 point rating range, the U2000 Section also had \$500 in prizes. Remarkably similar to how the U2200 Section resolved itself, several players had a shot at winning, and they were not decided until the second-to-last game of the tournament! Saeid Sadeghi and Mocktar Adamou-Ndiaye, two of the nicest gentlemen players, and regulars at Ottawa tournaments, both scored 3.5-1.5 for \$250 each.

When registrations were coming in for the U1800 Section, I noticed two things. First of all, the section would be relatively small, and the last player would be Jacob Krolczyk, rated exactly 1600. Jacob is a tremendously nice young man, and I thought to myself that he was a little unlucky to start at the bottom of the U1800 Section, which included many difficult players to play against. Well, my compassion was pointed in the wrong direction, as Jacob dominated with a score of 4.5-0.5, via very sharp chess throughout. Many people were happy for Jacob, who deservedly claimed the \$200 U1800 prize for himself.

Finishing off with the U1600 Section, this was by far the largest section this weekend. However, it was also the one with the most Amateur players, in fact half the field, resulting in a decent prize rate of one prize per every 5 non-Amateur players. The rating favourite starting off was local university student Liiban Farah, who then totally dominated the section, winning every single game en route to singlehandedly claiming the \$200 U1600 1st place prize.

In addition to the regular U1600 Section prize, there was also a special \$100 prize for the top Junior in that section. The story behind that is a nice one, dating back to the Ottawa Autumn Open in September. At that event, IM Brian Hartman won a modest prize, and then rather than claiming the money, he asked that it be used to build a Junior prize for this event. So I topped it up to \$100, and assigned it to the U1600 Section, as many of the kids there have never had the chance yet to win a prize. I am pleased to report that this special prize was won by teenager Michael Sun. This was achieved with a strong score of 3.5-1.5, and this 2nd-place-level score was also posted by Brian Murray (non-Junior), Keven Eyre (non-Junior), and Emil Levkovsky (Amateur).

As usual, I would like to conclude this event report by thanking those special people who helped make this tournament a success. On the first evening, when time was really tight, both Halldor Palsson and John Upper helped ensure we got started on time by mobilizing equipment from the RA Chess Club.

Floater player Marc D'Aoust was also there from the beginning, covering as required, and helping ensure that no one ever got hit with a forced bye. The flexibility of Marc was invaluable, as we had quite a few last-minute bye requests as the tournament progressed. Speaking of keeping us going by being at the right place at the right time, I

was very grateful to the Levkovsky family for a suite of delicious homestyle food, keeping me sharp in the playing room! ;)

Finally, thanks again to Halldor for also helping me pack up the playing room. To all of these helpful people, and others that I may have missed, thanks! :)

Please visit the weblink below for a PDF of the wall chart. It should be up a day or so after the event, and will eventually also link to the CFC crosstables. Note that with my Amateur upfloating to avoid forced byes, that I ran into some challenges with Swiss-Sys, and under time pressure, I just collapsed all of the sections into one big section (and a smaller single section for FIDE ratings input). So, the wall chart posted at the EOCA Tournaments webpage will be far more user-friendly than the eventual CFC crosstables. Sorry, but on the positive side, the wall chart includes colours! (which CFC crosstables do not)

People who take a closer look at the wall chart might notice quite a few draws in the 4th round, and more than the usual number of byes in the 5th round. This was due to a terribly unfortunate problem with the RA Centre fire alarm system midway through the 4th round. In a nutshell, as determined later, a faulty smoke alarm was repeatedly tripping the rather loud alarm, which played havoc with our players trying to maintain focus. Eventually, for a Sunday, specialized technicians were able to identify the faulty equipment, and grant assurances that we could play the 5th round with no risk of any more fake alarms. Throughout all this, our players conducted themselves with grace and perseverance, and I would like to express my admiration, especially for those who ended up playing exceptionally long 4th round games due to the alarms. The last 4th round games were almost 5 hours long, and yet those hardy players were ready to go within an hour for the 5th round. Thankfully, the last round was completely silent, which was just beautiful to our ears! :)

Yours in chess,

Aris Marghetis, FIDE Arbiter

Organizer/TD, EOCA President

http://www.eoca.org/htm/tournaments_2010-11.html

My next event will be the Ottawa Winter Open, scheduled for January 14th-16th. Stay tuned for details, including multiple early registration discounts!

If you would like to receive details about that event directly via email, please email arismarghetis@rogers.com to be added to my private email list.

Is there someone in your life who keeps asking what they can get you for Christmas? How about registration to the Ottawa Winter Open?! And if it would help, send me

their email address, and I can help them register you! (of course, other holiday names are also available! ;)