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Xiong, Perkins, and Tang Win National Titles

By IM David Pruess
June 12, 2012



Xiong

From June 8-10, two fierce 8-player round robins were contested on [chesskid.com](#). The participants were 16 of the most talented, skilled, and tough chess kids in the U.S. One group contested the title of U.S. under-12 Invitational Champion, and the other group U.S. under-8 Invitational Champion. With a time control of 90 minutes plus 5 second increment, the playing schedule which called for 3 games on Saturday and 3 games on Sunday was grueling, and fatigue, focus, stamina, and resilience were key ingredients for success. While all seemed to agree that a four-day schedule would be preferable in future events, this did allow us all to learn something: that these children are not only precociously talented in the arts of combination and positional play, but have the remarkable extra qualities like discipline and determination that we tend to associate only with more seasoned combatants.

A couple quick points about the rules for this event: invitations were made in March, based on the ratings and ages in the USCF February top-100 lists. Thus there could be players in the "under-8" or "under-12" who were already 8 or 12 at the time of the tournament. The only tiebreak in effect was that a player with 4 blacks would win over a player with 4 whites; one section ended in a tie, and since each player had the luck of 4 whites, they were declared co-champions. Also, the event was the first official, rated national championship [I know of] to be played online, thanks to the presence of tournament directors at the various chess clubs from which the kids played.

Efforts were made so that this would be a positive experience for all: there was live video coverage throughout every round; all participants received prizes; standings, results, and games were posted promptly between rounds; and a healthy atmosphere of sportsmanship and camaraderie were maintained throughout the event. When the last game finally ended at 11:30 pm on Sunday, two of the participants came into the coverage chat room to request an under-14 championship for next year, and more emails to that effect followed. Well, this event being a success, I promise we have some events in the works for next year, so

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stay tuned for a future announcement.

Inspiring Stories

Here are a few tidbits that were truly impressive:

One player in the under-8 section, Taran Idnani, lost his first six of seven games. His seventh game began at 8 pm. Against the highest rated player in his section. If he had lost that seventh game, one could easily imagine appending adjectives like "fatigued, dispirited, over-matched, ready to quit" in the retelling. But from somewhere, this youngster found the determination or inspiration to fight to the last pawn... and win an incredible last round upset.

The lowest-rated player in the under-12 section, Udit Iyengar, was on the verge of sensationally winning his first game of the tournament in round 3, when he accidentally created a three-fold repetition of position that his opponent pounced on. Frustrating? Disspiriting? Normally, yes; and yet in the very next round he went ahead and *did* notch his first upset!

Another under-12 participant, NM Jonathan Chiang complained to me Saturday evening: why were his games always the longest? Why did his opponents keep escaping from bad positions? He thought he was in really bad form and having a bad tournament. Despite which, when the final round rolled around, and 10 pm passed, and all the other players were done with their tournaments, Jonathan worked down to the last minute on his clock chasing a win in the following epic game (which is on the short-list for consideration for the event's "Best Game Prize"):

U.S. u-12 Champs
White: Jonathan Chiang
Black: Udit Iyengar

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.Nc3 Nf6
 5.d3 d6 6.h3 h6 7.O-O O-O 8.Ne2 a6
 9.Ng3 Be6 10.Re1 Re8 11.Bb3 d5
 12.Be3 Bxe3 13.Rxe3 b5 14.Re1 dxe4
 15.dxe4 Bxb3 16.axb3 Qe7 17.Qd3 Nb4
 18.Qc3 c5 19.Red1 g6 20.Rd2 Rac8
 21.Qe3 Kh7 22.c3 Nc6 23.Rxa6 Qb7
 24.Ra1 b4 25.Rd6 Ng8 26.Rad1 bxc3
 27.bxc3 Qxb3 28.R1d5 c4 29.Rc5 Qa4
 30.Kh2 Kg7 31.Nh4 Re6 32.Nhf5+ gxf5
 33.Nxf5+ Kh7 34.Rd7 Nge7 35.Rxc6 Qxc6

Game Position

Resilience does not only come from game to game. It is great to recover after a disappointing game, and clear your mind, and give your best effort in the next one. But another important skill is recovering from a bad move in that very game, and fighting to save it. Daniel Levkov impressed me tremendously from the very first round with his ability to come back from opening disasters. Witness the following two positions:

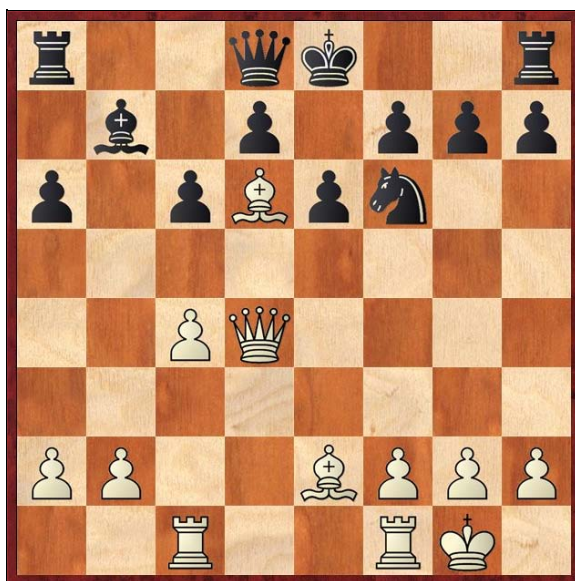
Taran Idnani vs. Daniel Levkov

at a USCF National Event?
[Click Here!](#)

- **US Open** August 4-12, Vancouver Washington, **Denker** tournament of high-school Champs & **Barber** tournament of K-8 Champs
- US Championship activity rules, changes to Olympiad Qualification and World Youth rules.
- TD Certification Rules and Rulebook changes updated (pdfs)
- USCF Fees for FIDE Change
- USCF National bidding brochure
- Reports & Standings pages for Grand Prix, JGP, MAP, top players by state, etc.

U.S. under-8 Champs / Chess.com

Round 1



White to move

Roshan Idnani vs. Daniel Levkov

U.S. under-8 Champs / Chess.com

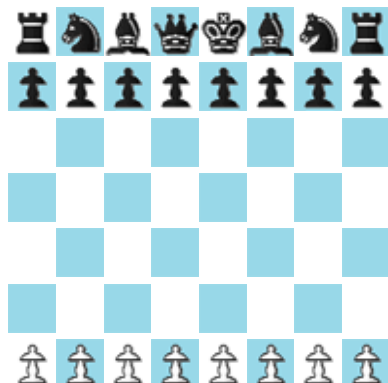
Round 6



White to move

Daniel won the first, and drew the second!

A similar tale is as follows:



Live Chess, chess.com

White: borlogavichj

Black: dragon1249

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7
 5.Bd3 c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ne2 Qb6 8.Nf3 cxd4
 9.cxd4 f6 10.exf6 Nxf6 11.O-O Bd6 12.b3 e5
 13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Nxe5 Bxe5 15.Be3 Qd6
 16.Rc1 Bxh2+ 17.Kh1 Ng4 18.Nd4 Nxe3
 19.fxe3 Qh6 20.Rxc8+ Rxc8 21.Nf5 Qg5
 22.Bb5+ Kd8 23.Qxd5+ Kc7 24.Kxh2 1/2-
 1/2



Game Position

The story: white is 2400-rated Jeffery Xiong. Seeing a previous game of Roland Feng's, he spent the short break between rounds searching for a way to break his opponent's opening, and found the brilliancy above. In the position above, Roland is in a losing position, with his opponent having barely spent a minute to bash out the moves. Intimidating? Probably hopeless? Normally yes, and yet... Roland scrapped his way to a half a point anyway.

In the under-8 section, Joaquin Perkins was one of the higher-rated players who could have entered the event aiming for first. Starting off with back-to-back losses, he had to set his sights on some more modest goal like not losing every game, or just playing well in his next game. He managed to do that... five games in a row and finally tie for first place!

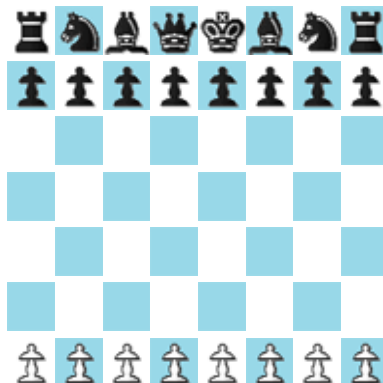
Which brings us to the...

Winners

Ethan Tang and Joaquin Perkins became U.S. under-8 Invitational Co-Champions, tying for first with 5/7, a bare half-point ahead of Jason Metpally and the early leader Daniel Levkov. Going into the last round, there were a few players who could win the championship, and the title came down to two nail-biting games, in which both eventual champions had to survive many a scare. These games easily kept young fans up past their bed-time to watch live video coverage:



Tang



U.S. under-8 Champs

White: Rohan Suryawanshi

Black: Ethan Tang

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4
 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 exd4 7.Qb3 Qe7 8.O-O Nf6
 9.Bg5 h6 10.Bxf6 Qxf6 11.cxd4 O-O
 12.e5 Qg6 13.Bd3 Qh5 14.h3 d6
 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Be4 Re8 17.Bxc6 bxc6
 18.Na3 Bc7 19.Rac1 c5 20.Qb5 Bxh3
 21.Qc6 Qg4 22.Nh2 Qg6 23.Kh1 Bf5
 24.Qxc7 Rec8 25.Qe7 cxd4
 26.Rxc8+ Rxc8 27.Qxa7 d3 28.Qd4 Ra8
 29.Nc4 d5 30.Ne5 Qf6 31.Qxd5 Rd8



32.Qa5 d2 33.Rd1 Bc2 34.Rxd2 Rxd2

Game Position

And the last game of the section to end:



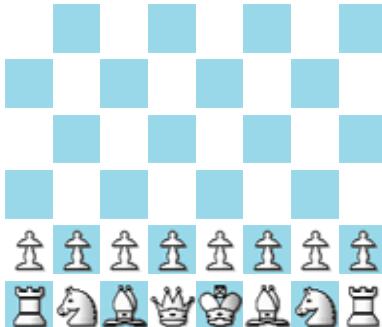
Perkins



U.S. under-8 Champs

White: Daniel Levkov

Black: Joaquin Perkins



1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nxd5
 4.Nf3 Nxc3 5.bxc3 Bf5 6.Bc4 e6
 7.Rb1 Nd7 8.d4 Nb6 9.Bb3 Bd6 10.O-O
 a5 11.a3 O-O 12.c4 a4 13.Ba2 c5
 14.Be3 Qc7 15.Rb5 cxd4 16.Qxd4 Nc8
 17.Qc3 Be7 18.Qb2 Nd6 19.Bf4 Ra5
 20.Bxd6 Rxb5 21.Qxb5 Qxd6
 22.Qxa4 Qxa3 23.Qxa3 Bxa3 24.Bb3 Be4
 25.Rd1 Bxf3 26.gxf3 Bc5 27.Rd7 b6
 28.Rb7 h5 29.Kg2 g6 30.h3 Rd8
 31.Ba4 Rd2 32.Be8 Rxf2+ 33.Kg3 Rxc2

Game Position

A worthy Championship game!!

The under-12 was not as close a race-- FM Jeffery Xiong (pictured thinking at the beginning of the story), outrating the rest of the field by about 180 points was every bit as impressive as his rating, clinching the title in round 6. Here is one of the key games, in which he defeated the other early leader, NM Cameron Wheeler:



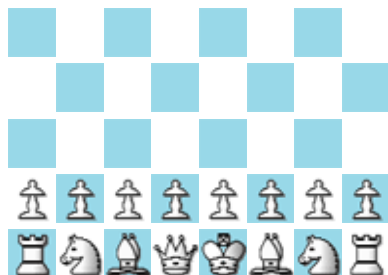
U.S. u-12 Champs

White: borlogavichj

Black: Caminator2000



1.e4 e6 2.Qe2 c5 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.g3 Nge7
 5.Bg2 g6 6.O-O Bg7 7.d3 O-O 8.Nbd2 b5



9.Re1 a5 **10**.e5 Qc7 **11**.a4 b4 **12**.Nc4 Ba6
13.h4 Bxc4 **14**.dxc4 Rac8 **15**.Bf4 Nf5
16.Rad1 Ncd4 **17**.Nxd4 cxd4 **18**.b3 Qc5
19.Bh3 f6 **20**.exf6 Bxf6 **21**.Be5 Ne7
22.Bxf6 Rxf6 **23**.Qe5 Qxe5 **24**.Rxe5 Nc6
25.Rb5 Rcf8 **26**.f4 e5 **27**.fxe5 Rf3
28.Bxd7 Rxc3+ **29**.Kh2 Rff3 **30**.Rg1 Rxc1
31.Kxc1 Ne7 **32**.Be6+ Kg7 **33**.Rxa5 Rc3
34.Ra7 Kf8 **35**.Ra8+ Kg7 **36**.Re8 Nf5

Game Position

Jeffery finished with 5 wins and 2 draws, 1.5 points ahead of second place Roland Feng with 4.5/7.

There are too many great stories to tell and great games to review; so if you'd like to learn more about this event, you can check out the following links for complete standings, results, games, archived video coverage, photos, etc.: [under-8](#) and [under-12](#) ; and stay tuned for a further report on Chess.com and an article in ChessLife for Kids.

The event was sponsored by Chesskid.com, organized by myself, and made possible by 16 terrific young chess players, 32 devoted parents, many dedicated chess club managers and tournament directors, one PinkHamster (Chesskid.com content manager, David Petty), one HealthyChicken, and Susan Houston and Bill Hall at the USCF.

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