

Remarks on the 2016 Cincinnati Open

The 2016 Cincinnati Open was played on April 1-3 at the Blue Ash Hilton Garden Inn and attracted 90 players. Player feedback about the Blue Ash HGI was very positive, with respect to both the playing venue and the sleeping accommodations. The organizers are working hard to secure this venue again for 2017--and optimistically beyond.

Each section was well populated and competitive, although the tournament overall was devoid of any remarkable upsets. In the Open Section the inimitable Chuck Diebert provided some interest. He was responsible for both losses suffered by the eventual prize-winners, defeating Blake Baumgartner in round 1 and Scott Ramer in round 2. He also drew Yuri Barnakov in round 4. Diebert's round 3 bye and round 5 draw with Aristo Liu set the stage for Barnakov and Ramer to draw in round 5, giving Barnakov a clear first place with 4.0/5, with Diebert and Ramer tying for 2nd at 3.5. Baumgartner finished alone in 4th place with 3.0. In addition to playing well, Diebert admirably took on a major responsibility for noise control, which the tournament director greatly appreciated.

This year's tournament was noteworthy for the proportion of scholastic players entered. Fully half of the 90 players in the event were scholastic players. A tip of the hat to all of them, first, because they comported themselves quite respectably overall, and, second, because as a group they scored very well. Although they were shut out from the Open section prizes, scholastic players won every other section.

In the U2100 section Anagh Kulkarni scored the event's only 5.0 score. Behind him Elton Cao and Akash Narayanan tied with 4.0, and eight other scholastic players with 3.0 each took home a thin slice of the 4th place prize. In short, of the 11 prize winners in this section, all 11 were scholastic players.

Trenton Rothan won the U1700 section with 4.5. Quentin Docter and Skylar Garrett tied for 2nd with 4.0, and four scholastic players shared fourth place. In the U1300 Nate Smith (scholastic) tied with Kevin Storn with 4.5. Three other scholastic players claimed the other prizes (Steven Fu 4.0, Edison Liu 3.5, and Joseph Winkler 3.5). In all the "under" sections, 20 of 23 prize winners were scholastic players.

The Cincinnati Open continues to be popular with players willing to travel to play. Of the 90 players who entered, 33 were from Ohio outside the greater Cincinnati area, and 24 came from out of state (Michigan 10, Indiana 6, Illinois 4, Tennessee 2, and West Virginia and Kentucky 1 each).

Wall charts and standings are posted on www.chesscincinnati.com, and the wall charts are also posted at www.us.chess.org as usual.