

2016 Ohio Chess Congress Report

By Kelly M. Bloomfield

This year's Ohio Chess Congress was held at the Ohio Union at The Ohio State University over the Labor Day weekend. We kicked off the Congress Friday evening with 38 players doing battle over the board. Saturday was by far the most hectic day as the Buckeye Football Team had their home opener against Bowling Green. It did not end well for the Falcons from Bowling Green as they lost 77-10 to the Buckeyes. We had the band playing above the tournament room for a while and the Men's Glee Club singing traditional OSU songs in the main rotunda, but none of this seemed to bother our chess competitors though as they played right through the distractions. I was most surprised by the amount of Buckeye Football spectators that stopped by to see what the chess tournament was all about. The chess vendor (Robert Chenault) can attest to this as his sales on Saturday soared due to all of the Buckeye Football Fans. All-in-all it was great exposure for Ohio Chess and hopefully we may have inspired some new faces to start playing competitive chess.

The Congress this year was 7 rounds over 4 days with 3 choices of schedules and it was the first time in over 40 years it was 7 rounds as compared to the traditional 6 rounds. Out of the 101 players, 92 were from Ohio, 4 from Pennsylvania, 2 from Indiana, 1 from Tennessee, 1 from Georgia, and 1 from Maryland. There were 3 sections but prizes were awarded as class prizes once again. Here is your 2016 champions list:

- **Ohio Open Champion** – Mika Brattain
- **Ohio Expert Champion** – Jason Wang
- **Ohio Class A Champion** – Tyler Rutherford
- **Ohio Class B Champions** – Ethan Ferkins & Ben Tancinco
- **Ohio Class C Champion** – Victoria Baker
- **Ohio Class D Champions** – Yogeshwar Sridhar Yehamandram & Benjamin Yin
- **Ohio Class E Champion** – Adeti Mohanselvan

Some of the highlights at this year's Ohio Chess Congress were that we hosted the current reigning US Open Champion (GM Alexander Shabalov) and the current reigning Denker Champion (OSU Freshman Mika Brattain). Both of them chose the shortened 2-day schedule and both of them proved to be the competition to beat. In round 2 Mika had the white pieces against GM Shabalov and the game did not disappoint as Mika pulled out the win in an exciting middle game. The full game can be seen on the OCA website. GM Shabalov and Mika Brattain both finished the tournament with 6 out of 7 and split the 1st & 2nd place prizes. Mika had only 2 draws over the course of the 7 rounds and was crowned as the Ohio Champion as GM Shabalov did not qualify for the title since he resides in another state. The young phenomenon Jason Wang had a good tournament winning the Ohio Expert title and perhaps his best win of the tournament came in the last round in which he beat James Mills from Indiana to secure the

title. In the Premier Section, the most impressive showing of the tournament had to be from Tyler Rutherford from Columbus. Tyler scored 6.5 out of 7 running away with clear first and the Class A state title. His opponent in the last round said Tyler was up in the game but when he offered him the draw Tyler accepted being the gentleman that he is and seeing how he already wrapped up clear 1st. In the Reserve Section, it was Adeti Mohanselman who scored 5.5 out of 7 who had the best showing. She was crowned the Class E champion.

On Sunday we hosted a 7 round Blitz tournament in between rounds 6 and 7. Twenty one players in all competed... Yuri Barnakov took first place with a perfect score while Carl Boor took second place scoring 6 out of 7.

After all was said and done I was exhausted Monday evening, but I would say the 2016 Ohio Chess Congress was a success as I heard very little complaints and mostly complements on how well the tournament was organized and ran. My personal thanks go out to Kathy Lin who was my Chief Assistant Tournament Director and a special thanks to Ben Tancinco for running the Blitz Tournament so Kathy and I could attend the Ohio Chess Association members meeting. I would also like to thank John Miller who stayed late Monday with Kathy and me to help clean up and pack everything away. I hope to see you all at next year's Ohio Chess Congress... wherever it may be.