I am extremely honored to have won the 2010 North Carolina Grand Prix.

Chess Central provided a wonderful gift certificate of $350, which I used to purchase my dream Chess set. The magnificent Heritage Chess set, handcrafted imported Red Sandalwood and Boxwood pieces, is the most beautiful chess set I ever owned. During the NCGP competition, I would visit the Chess Central website and just look at all nice chess things available. I felt like a kid in a candy store and Chess Central kept me motivated throughout the year.

The NCCA also awarded me with a $ 541.67 check. To all the tournament directors participating in the NCGP, I thank you for making this possible. The monthly Saturday tournaments I mostly played in were the TACO, TAO, Master Trek, and Reverse Angle. Jeff Jones, Tom Hales, Craig Jones, and Gary Newsom deserve a special thanks in directing these tournaments and making North Carolina one of the best places for Chess. The 2010 NC Open was a fantastic event and a model for future big tournaments in NC. Gary Newsom, NCCA president & Walter High, NCCA Vice president, and the entire staff of the NCCA deserves a very big thank you for providing this quality chess event. The presentation of the Grand Prix awards was a very nice ending to a great chess year.

NM Chris Mabe won the NCGP in 2009. The last round game of the NC Open actually determined the NCGP Champion. That memory instilled in me the importance of participating in each of the tournaments in the NC Grand Prix. Chris and I are off to a determined start in this Grand Prix race and I hope the rest of you will join us.

The North Carolina Grand Prix is more than a competition. Participating in each of the NC tournaments moves you closer to the goal of becoming a stronger chess player. In the first NC GP event for 2010, The Asheboro Open, I faced NM Chris Mabe in the last round. He defeated me by simply using concepts from a famous game played by Emanuel Lasker, in a variation of the Dutch defense. The result of this defeat caused me to reflect and refine my chess decision processes. I went on to defeat GM Boris Gulko (2587) and IM Dmitry Schneider (2520) in this season’s United State Chess League. In another case I lost again in a last round game to NM Maurice Dana in a Sicilian Dragon, at the TACO. This defeat caused me to develop a deeper understanding in the Chinese Dragon variation. This experience was also very instrumental in helping me to defeat IM Dmitry Schneider. Come on out to these tournaments so you can experience what I am writing. I am certain you will obtain big improvements in your chess performance!

Thank you again, North Carolina Chess Association, Directors, and NC chess players for a wonderful North Carolina Grand Prix. I will cherish this championship forever.