

## Tidewater Routs Queen City in Team Match

Battling wits on neutral ground in Henderson, NC, the Tidewater Chess Club drove into town on a warm Sunday morning and sent the Queen City Chess Club back to the study hall with a clear victory of 14-6. Leading the way for Tidewater was the calm and collected Yuri Barnakov, who consecutively defeated Patrick McCartney on board 3. Barnakov joined Larkins, Robinson, and veteran Ernie Schlich in winning from both sides of the board in a contest that saw only 5 draws out of 22 games. On the top board, NM Dan Miller schooled the teacher NM Chris Mabe with the black pieces and drew round 2. Despite a strong 2-0 contribution from Charles Carreros, the first team match for the Charlotte squad was quite difficult from the outset, as they posted a lopsided 2.5-7.5 result with the white pieces in round one, prompting at least one NC player to wonder whether the fish were biting on nearby Kerr Lake.



Dominique Myers (left) faces Larry Larkins. NM Mabe calculating

Team matches offer an interesting alternative to typical tournament formats. One challenge is that unexpected roster changes may result in an uneven amount of players from opposing teams. In this case, the Queen City Club ended up with two extra players. After brief team consultation, it was

determined that four players would face their own teammates in one round by way of volunteering and then by who had committed to play last. Fortunately, an even number of players showed. The final score of the late joining and amateur chess reporter Hudson sparked a joke that the friendly Norfolk fellows had recruited a defector after he succumbed easily to Schlich by accepting a pawn for 28 more moves of misery (including a missed mate on move 22) and then turned the tide on his own teammate in the second round extra game. In reality the more experienced and slightly higher-rated team from Norfolk needed no help. Noteworthy was an interesting win by the talented NM Adithya Balasubramanian over expert Newsom, who gained a nice attack with the rook that Gary failed to trap with 24. Nc7 (see game annotation).



NM Balasubramanian (right) vs. Newsom in round 1

The somewhat small room adjoining the Days Inn lobby proved to be a bit crowded, although the QC's young gun Peter Giannatos optimistically pointed out that such an arrangement provided easy viewing of multiple games. Personally I found that the breakfast bar was a little too close to avoid being wooed by pastries and bananas and that dodging players headed to the hole is best left to basketball teams. That being said, the management was very kind and the competition conducted in a friendly and sporting manner. Team play provides

protection from facing players from your own club and helps build friendships in a sport that has isolationist tendencies, especially in this computer chess era. This contest was also helpful on the wallet, as the only fees and prizes were pride and the minimal room rental fee, which was picked up by the losing club. The simple top to bottom matchup pairing style would make for a very interesting weekend tournament round robin if more teams were competing, although arranging a site with relatively equal travel distance among many teams could be a challenge. Alternatives to the format played include pairings against different opponents and creating home and away matches. The second option would allow the host to survey the site beforehand and give home-cooking and rest advantages as well.



Gil Holmes (left) on his way to a round 1 win against Ilya Kremenchugskiy

Thanks to organizers and participants for an enjoyable weekend and congratulations to Tidewater, who played quite well. The Queen City team remains hungry for their first win and is seeking clubs small and large to challenge, so stay healthy and rested because next time it won't be so easy!

Jonathan Hudson