

Oklahoma at the K-6 Nationals 2011, Dallas, Texas - 6-8 May 2011

From all directions kids, parents, coaches, and organizers descended on Dallas over the past weekend. Many states and schools had extremely strong showings of 50+ kids. Representing Oklahoma was the Fords, Ben Coleman, Michael Shively, Pranav Jayachand, Sanjeev Musuvathy, Howard Zhong, Daniel (Matthew) Rhoads, Rylee Buchert, Saagar Basavaraju playing in their respective sections along with my partner in crime John Cope and myself coaching all that came to our tables.

Rylee, competed in the unrated section and had many of his losses won on the board. His first day was met with losses, but his second day he came back with a vengeance earning 2.5 pts. While the ever quite Daniel won three games straight before facing a defeat. Daniel only rated 429 faced down opponents nearly double his rating and returned victorious with winning positions against all he played and finished with a score of 4.

Another Oklahoman in the K-6 Unrated was Alexander Coleman. Alexander came out of the gates roaring through his competition immediately winning three straight games but due to illness had to withdraw from the tournament after the third round.

Saagar represented the University School with Daniel and Rylee but in the K-5 Championship section. With tough competition he pulled out a score of 3pts with his losses to players rated three hundred points higher than him. His wins included a 1226 from Texas in the 5th round. Another Oklahoman in the K5 championship was Pranav who scored 3.5 and did very well against the very tough competition of his section.

The Ford family had three playing in the tournament including Clara, Elias, and Miriam. Miriam competed in the K-6 U1000 and battling strong competition capturing 4pts. While, in K-3 U800 Elias finished with a strong 5.5 earning him 17th place with tiebreaks.

Other tough competitors from Oklahoma that were not in the championship sections, Sanjeev and Howard appeared to be vying for the K-5 U900 win with perfect scores till the fifth round. Howard beat his opponent while Sanjeev drew the third place finisher. Going into the seventh round Howard was the leader a half point ahead of all his competition with Sanjeev having the possibility to tie for first or second. Sanjeev eventually appeared with his score unchanged from the prior round ending with a very respectable 5.5pts. After a wait and a combination destroying his opponent's kingside Howard walked out with a perfect score of 7pts.

Fun Times Coaching in
Dallas:



Friday, after round 1. On the left is John Cope and opposite is Charles M. Unruh with three of the Oklahoma competitors

Setting up initially on the floor the first day our group gathered and prepped for round one with blitz games. While Oklahoma's young competitors disappeared to compete we took seats on ridges above our sunken area. After going to an Indian restaurant and returning with some very interesting driving on my part the youngsters were unleashed for the second round. Learning the results then going over the games left everyone calling it a night.

Waking up early John Cope and myself went about capturing tables near where we were sitting the day before. Then after fighting to keep all of our seats from roaming seat borrowers we did wake up blitz games with instruction. Those who returned from round three early found the coaches lock in blitz combat with most if not all games being draws.



Mid-Day we left John to guard everything and piled into my Tracker to hunt down a place to have lunch. A lack of knowledge of the area led to a sightseeing tour that included the grassy knoll. Arriving back after finding a wings place and subway we returned with lunch for John and plenty of time for warm up and instruction games.

With Round four underway I was left to guard everything at the tables, when a silent youngster from Miami Florida sat down at my table. After a few games and suggestions for his play he thanked us leaving the table in silence.

When Oklahomans began to show back up bughouse games at our tables got underway and the yellow shirted Texans of Robert Jones' 50+ scholastic chess team began to surround our tables and challenge in as many Oklahomans left to go eat dinner.

With the usual warm up of blitz games we set our players loose upon the fifth round. A bit of waiting and kids began to trickle out of the playing hall. One of the first was the youngster from Miami who instantly said he had won his game. His grandmother who had travelled with him came over and thanked us for helping him and claimed what we had taught him had really come in handy during his game.

Following going through the games of the Oklahoma youths they began to leave to get some sleep as parents and coaches from other states began to ask if their kids could play us. Playing till 10:15pm we backed it up and deposited our gear at the hotel before walking over to an over crowded Denny's for dinner. A swarm of Navy Blue and kaki had come in immediately after us along with a few other groups possibly rendering us invisible to the poor hostess who was already overwhelmed.

A new day and a slightly later wake up. Still managing to snag the tables from the day before and we went about coaching or playing the kids including our new friend from Florida.

The sixth round came to a close with a growth in wisdom we decided to order pizza for lunch rather than wonder the Dallas roads in the Tracker.

Going into the seventh round we were about to seat our players when a flood of navy and kaki flowed down the stairs with their coach holding up their school sign in front of them while they chanted their school fight song. Coming to a stop before the area where the pairings were set up the coach stepped to the side while holding up the banner like a bull fighter and his kids pasted through it before crashing into the playing area. It was a sight to behold.

The end results of the tournament demonstrated the ability of Oklahoma's scholastic players and the future of chess. The kids from Oklahoma and else where represent possibilities for chess in the United States, a future of very strong players with plenty of potential.

Coaching at the tournament was a blast and I'm looking forward to the next time. These experiences are some of the most fun people can have and help to develop a future for chess in Oklahoma and the United States. Volunteer when you can and join John, myself, and the other chess coaches around the state in encouraging kids preparing a better future for us all.

Most of the Oklahoma players from the K-6 nationals will be attending Chess Adventure Camp to train while having fun. The camp is a week full of fun events including chess relays, a Pan Am style team tournament on Friday, and other great events for both new and experienced chess player. The instructors include some of Oklahoma's finest players with extensive tournament experience such as Master Chuck Unruh, many time Oklahoma Denker National High School Championship representative John Cope, and our current Denker representative Steven Gehly. Occurring July 11-15 the camp is followed by the OCA (Oklahoma Chess Association) Blue Fish Open on the sixteenth for those who can stay an extra day or will still be in town including adults.

Hope to see you at one of Oklahoma's many great chess events,

-C. M. Unruh