

Summary, 2015 US Open and Annual Delegates' Meeting

Fellow members of the Virginia Chess Federation:

The US Chess Federation, now officially called "US Chess", held the annual Delegates' Meeting on August 8th and 9th during the US Open in Phoenix, Arizona. It was 115 degrees outside, but a cool 70-72 indoors. We wanted to take a moment to provide you with a brief summary of some of the latest happenings as a result of the Delegates' Meeting.

The Commonwealth of Virginia was represented by VCF Chairman of the Board, Mike Hoffpauir, and ANTD Anand Dommalapati. While Virginia is authorized up to 5 delegates, the distance of this year's Delegates' Meeting from our state, plus the timing of the meeting, prohibited other VCF members from attending. Now, on to the major points of discussion ...

First, the USCF is re-branding itself as "US Chess", complete with a new logo and redone website. All current website content is being migrated gradually during what US Chess is calling "Phase One" of the redesign. It will take about a year. USCF is asking members to send feedback and comments on the fresh coat of paint being applied to the website and its content.

Second, there is going to be a small dues increase in the not too distant future. Before voting on the matter the Delegates from all states pushed hard to understand "why" the increases are needed, especially when the federation's Treasurer, Allen Priest, briefed that US Chess enjoyed about a \$400,000 profit in business year 2014-15. In response, the Treasurer cited at least two primary reasons: 1) The current contract for printing Chess Life and Chess Life for Kids is coming to an end, and the new contract will cost significantly more; and, 2) A sizeable percentage of the "profit" realized in 2014-15 was the result of personnel staffing decisions made by the Executive Director, Jean Hoffman. She decided not to fill certain positions in the past year until their roles could be rewritten and re-scoped for hiring later in the 2015-16 business year—a decision that saved some money. Ok, enough of that ... here's how we anticipate membership dues changing:

- Three-year memberships are going away. If you want one of these, get it now before they are gone.
- A one-year Adult Premium membership (e.g. with Chess Life) will increase from \$46 to either \$49 or \$50. Without the magazine the price will remain at \$40. The Delegates did not like the increase to \$50—seeing it as crossing a threshold of pain—but the Delegates felt an increase to \$49 was more palatable.
- Young Adult memberships (18-25 years old) will increase from \$33 to \$35 for the Premium membership, and no change to the \$26 "regular" membership without the Magazine.
- Youth and Scholastic memberships had \$2 and \$1 increases, respectively, for their Premium memberships, and no increase for the regular memberships.

Third, US Chess is creating an "Anti-Cheating Committee" somewhat similar in purpose to the panel FIDE established a year or so ago. You can see the results of FIDE's work by [clicking here](#). The US Chess committee will be led by long-time VCF member, National Tournament Director and former VCF President, Mike Atkins and new US Chess President Gary Walters. Mike Hoffpauir also has been invited to be on the committee.

Fourth, US Chess is forming a committee to create specifications for digital clocks so that manufacturers can build clocks that comply with a published standard. Right now, as many of you may realize, some clocks work differently than others—especially when dual time controls are involved, or when a clock runs down to no time left. Flags fall, clocks flash, some keep counting past zero ... it's a bit of a mess. This is just bad and needs to be standardized.

Next, you can say good-bye very soon to couple of older rules and specifications in chess. First, Castling by moving the Rook first soon will become an Illegal Move, just like it is in FIDE. Thus, the days are rapidly coming to an end when the TD can “provide a warning” to someone who Castles with their Rook first first—that will be a Rook Move, not Castling. Also, Analog Clocks have been declared “Non-Standard” clocks for chess. This does NOT mean that a player cannot use his/her Analog Clock. Rather, it means that ANY properly functioning Digital Chess Clock is better to use than an Analog clock, even if the digital clock does not have time delay or time increment. This may not be a surprise to most of you—but we have some staunch traditionalists out there.

Virginia had several participants in the US Open and its associated Side Events.

- Jennifer Yu repeated as the National Girls Invitational Champion, defending her 2014 title! Jennifer qualified to represent the state by being our highest-rated girl.
- Evan Ling finished 27th out of 50 players (3.0/6.0) in the Barber Tournament of state K8 Champions. Evan qualified to represent Virginia by winning the K8 Section in our scholastic state championships this past March.
- Taylor Brunotts finished 27th out of 46 (2.5/6.0) in the High School “Arnold Denker” Championships. Taylor qualified for the Denker Tournament by placing 2nd in the High School Section of our state scholastic championships. The first place winner at states was Jennifer Yu, but Jennifer opted to defend her NGIT title.
- In the US Open main tournament, six Virginians pushed their pawns and three finished with plus scores. Carla Naylor scored the best result and finished with 5.5/9.0. Evan Ling and Charles Green were right behind with 5.0/9.0. The other participating Virginians were Aasa Dommalapati (4.5), Jonathan Naylor (4.5), and Nicholas Naylor (2.0).

Last, at the US Open VCF Chairman Mike Hoffpauir announced his candidacy for US Chess’s Executive Board. Mike plans to run for one of two positions that will open in 2016. Mike may ask you for your signature on the obligatory Petition he must complete in accordance with the US Chess By-Laws.

Like we said at the start of this report, it was 115 degrees outside, but a nice cool 72 indoors!! It was fun watching GM Shabalov run through the field and score 8.5/9 to take home a clear win in this year’s open.

Good luck in your chess endeavors ...

Mike Hoffpauir and Anand Dommalapati
Virginia Delegates to the 2015 US Chess Delegates Meeting