



# PRESS RELEASE

(Immediate Release)

## Local Chess Club Hosts First Annual Chess Tournament in Bellingham

*Bellingham, Washington. March 15, 2018.*

For the first time, Bellingham will be the location of an organized chess tournament, the “Dueling Queens Chess Championship.” Organized by the Bellingham Knights Chess Club, the all-day event will be held on May 5, 2018 at Hotel Bellingham’s Fox Hall near the airport (formerly Hampton Inn). The event is open to all ages and skill levels in Whatcom County and the Northwest.

The tournament will be divided into two sections: one for adults and one for scholastic/student players (K-12th grades) The Swiss system will be used for pairing competitors during five rounds of play. Due to the low number of USCF (US Chess Federation) members in Whatcom county, the tournament will not require USCF registration. The scholastic players will utilize NWSRS (Northwest Scholastic Rating System) ratings for pairings. Local chess coach, Tanner Feemster, will be the Tournament Director for the event.

The adult section will compete for \$800 in cash prizes, while the student section will vie for prizes and trophies. For county residents, the top-performing players from each section will also receive recognition as the “Best Chess Player in Whatcom County.”

Steve Szirom, event organizer, said "Chess is a 1,500-year old game as well as a language that is spoken in every country. I believe playing chess enhances creativity, problem solving, character, co-operative skills, patience, reading skills, and even IQ scores." Chess has proven educational benefits. There are numerous



studies showing improved concentration and cognitive development among students, and engages the adult brain in a highly stimulating way to keep it sharp. Szirom stated that chess is relatively easy to learn but takes a lifetime to master. He said that Bellingham has many fun events but none of them have been of a “strategic, thinking” nature. Szirom is hoping to make chess a more important part of the local community.

The tournament is sponsored by ChessHouse.com, a Lynden-based online retailer of chess-related products, and Bellingham Youth Chess which is focused on coaching students and hosting scholastic chess events.

Advance registration is strongly recommended. The “early bird” entry fee, good until March 30, is \$30 for adults and \$20 for students. Afterwards, the fees are \$40 and \$25. Registration at the door will also be available if space allows.

Online registration and tournament details are available at [www.BellinghamChess.com](http://www.BellinghamChess.com).

#### About the Bellingham Knights Chess Club:

The Bellingham Knights Chess Club was founded in November, 2015 to foster chess play in the Whatcom County area offering opportunities for all ages and skill levels to meet others and play the world’s most strategic game for challenge, fun and skills improvement.. Regular chess gatherings are on Sundays at 2:00 PM in the central Bellingham Public Library’s Lecture Room. Drop-in players are welcome although registration on the club’s website is free and comes with benefits. The club is free join as it relies on volunteers, donors and sponsors. The Bellingham Public Library and ChessHouse.com are current sponsors.

#### Contact:

*Steve Szirom*

*Tel: (360) 676-2260*

[BellinghamChess@comcast.net](mailto:BellinghamChess@comcast.net)

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