

## Information for Parents and Players New to Chess Tournaments

### Things to bring:

Camera

Snacks

Games to entertain players between rounds

Books/Magazines to entertain parents during rounds

### Things you should know:

- (1) The tournaments really do last all day – about 9 a.m. to 4 or 5 p.m. Kindergarten sections generally move at a faster pace since the younger players play their games more quickly and the section is smaller and easier to pair. Kindergarten sections often finish by 2:00, with the award ceremony quickly following. Players in the 1-3 section will not have to play with a clock unless the game is running over. In the 1-3 section, if your player's opponent brings a clock, you may decline using it. Players in the 4-6 section should be prepared to play with a clock. If their opponent brings a clock and wants to play with the clock, then they **MUST** play with the clock. The player with the black pieces chooses what side of the board the clock should be on.
- (2) All players play ALL 5 rounds – there is no elimination.
- (3) Younger kids really need a parent present, and children of all ages require supervision. Often parents will trade off supervising several kids. Once at the tournament site, each child needs to be able to get to each match on time, either by themselves, or with an adult.
- (4) Pairings are done based on ratings and the win/loss record during the tournament. The system of pairings means that in the first couple of rounds a novice could play a moderately good player. If your child wins their first round, in the next round they will play someone who also won their first round. Thus, players become more evenly matched in later rounds.
- (5) The tournaments usually have separate divisions for grades K, K-3 and 4-6. Obviously the toughest place to be is at the bottom of a section in K-3 or 4-6. Even among these sections, however, the best players in each grade will receive trophies (e.g. a 1<sup>st</sup> grader who wins 3 matches has a pretty good shot at a trophy, while a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader needs to win 4 or 5 games for a trophy, because there are more older kids winning more matches). The Northwest Grade Level Tournament is unique in that students play only others in the same grade.

- (6) Concessions are often available on-site, but you should also bring some snacks and water to be sure your child eats and drinks. Be sure to bring any sports equipment, reading material, games or other ways to pass the time. If you're lucky, you can find a place to plug in your laptop (although please note that WiFi is limited (and often unavailable) at Medina Elementary). Parents often read and chat with other parents. During our Medina Elementary tournaments, parents are not permitted to watch the chess games.
- (7) Any player who earns 3 points (3 wins, or 2 wins + 2 draws) in a "qualifying tournament" may play in the State Championship.
- (8) Once committed to a tournament, a player needs to show up, or let the tournament organizer know ahead of time if you have to cancel. A no-show of any player leaves another player without an opponent in the first round, which is frustrating. Refunds are generally not available.
- (9) Chess tournaments are great fun for all involved – it is one of the few events where families from all different schools, from all over the state get together regularly. It is a wonderful opportunity for kids to meet new friends, and sustain old friendships – beyond the bounds of their own school.