



## SPFNO 2025

By SPFNO Organizers | November 23, 2025

**Bellevue, WA** – The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Girls and Boys took place at the Hilton Bellevue on the weekend of November 22-23, 2025. Scholastic chess players in grades K-12 from states including Washington, Oregon, Texas, British Columbia, California, and Colorado participated in the two-day chess fest. The SPFNO, now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, was first hosted in Texas in 2006 by SPF Founder GM Susan Polgar and has blossomed into a premier national scholastic chess event. A total of 470 players competed across eleven sections parsed by grade level and rating: K-1 U700, 2-3 U700, 4-6 U700, K-3 Open, 4-6 Open, 7-12 Open, K-5 Girls, K-5 Open, K-8 Open, K-12 Girls, and K-12 Open. The event was co-hosted by the Susan Polgar Foundation (SPF) and the Washington Chess Federation (WCF). SPF Founder Grandmaster Susan Polgar and SPF co-Founder Paul Truong were once again the guests of honor, in addition to Rebel Queen Award Winners Orna Berryman and Claire Sumadiwiryra, who were recognized for their leadership and achievements on Saturday afternoon. The experienced team of WCF President Josh Sinanan (Chief Organizer), Jacob Mayer (Chief Tournament Director), Ben Radin (Registration and Pairings Director), and Eddie Chang (Events Manager) organized the event and coordinate the weekend's busy slate of activities. The amazing group of dedicated volunteers, judges, and tournament directors included Norm May, Mani Atikankhotchasee, Allen Messenger, Ani Barua, Rekha Sagar, Shelly, Kevin, and David Hirschowitz, Valentin Razmov, Ian Holden, Duane Polich, Luis Ayala, Aditya Ponukumati, Stani Vlasseva, Daniel Wilke, Sangeeta Dhingra, Vignesh Anand, Nicholas Liotta,

Walter Guity, Chouchan Airapetian, Angela Agaian, Detective Denise “Cookie” Bouldin, Alex Byelashov, Sridhar Seshadri, Face Painter Gabby Carrillo, and many others. Amazing photographs and video footage were chronicled throughout the weekend by the amazing Meiling Cheng. Throughout the weekend, SPFNO families had the opportunity to wander up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Hilton and sneak a peek of the SPICE Cup, which included five Grandmasters! Along with the 1-day Scholastic and 2-day Championship sections, several fun and exciting side events enhanced the joyous ambience of the event and provided entertainment during the marathon stretch of intense chess competition. Saturday’s busy schedule of events included a Parents and Coaches Seminar, Face Painting by local artist Gabby Carrillo, SPFNO Girls Workshop, Susan Polgar Book Signing, SPFNO T-shirt Sale, FM Megan Lee All-comers blitz, SPFNO Puzzle Solving Competition, and the SPFNO Blitz Championship. Sunday featured an additional Susan Polgar Book Sale + Signing (including Susan’s best-selling Rebel Queen autobiography), a 19-player Susan Polgar Simul, and the final three rounds of the challenging 2-day Championship sections!

This year’s SPFNO’s 470-player attendance was the second most in the event’s history, slightly down from last year’s 488-player record. The inclusion of the highly sought-after FIDE-rated games in the 2-day K-12 Championship sections was notable with 91 ambitious FIDE rating hunters participating across the K-12 Girls and K-12 Open sections. The organizers hope to make the SPFNO even bigger and better next year, having already started discussions with several Bellevue-area hotels! The 2-day Championship sections, which feature both open and girls-only sections, were slightly weaker this year due to the many of the top local juniors taking part in the co-located SPICE Cup in search of norm opportunities. Nevertheless, this year’s 2-day K-12 Open still attracted a star-studded lineup of several strong players including NM Gordon Xu (2202), William Summerfield (2005), Saahil Gupta (1972), Nikhil Ramkumar (1917), Aarav B. Mohan (1899), Gavin Shi (1864), Odbayar Yondon (1861), Brook Ayalew (1857), and Vishnu Mohan (1811). Top seeds in the K-12 Girls section included last year’s winner Emel Bayrambeyli (1918), Tanya Prabhu (1908), Kylie Zhang (1896), Varnika Jammalamadaka (1821), Ella Guo (1803), Selina Cheng (1743), Deeksha Shankaranand (1729), and Lily Deng (1731). Unfortunately, a change in leadership at Webster University resulted in the scholarships not being offered this year, and the organizers sincerely hope to bring them back in the future!

*Special congratulations to the 2025 SPFNO winners:*

K-1 U700: 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Place – **Ellie Han & Echo Fang** (4.5/5! – Co-Champions)

2-3 U700: =1<sup>st</sup> Place – **Dylan Glaser** (5/5!!)

4-6 U700: =1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – **Gautham Satishkumar, Maximilian Lange & Tricia Thomas** (4.5/5!! – Co-Champions)

K-3 Open: 1<sup>st</sup> Place – **Baoshuo Yao** (5/5!!)

4-6 Open: 1<sup>st</sup> Place – **Aarav Kandar** (5/5!!)

7-12 Open: 1<sup>st</sup> Place – **Jesse Aubry** (5/5!!)

K-5 Girls: =1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Place – **Elina Khudyev & Sofia Byelashova** (4/5! – Co-Champions)

K-5 Open: 1<sup>st</sup> Place – **Samik Kulkarni** (5/5!!)

K-8 Open: =1<sup>st</sup> Place – **Ian Gagnier** (5/5!!)

K-12 Girls: 1<sup>st</sup> Place – **Kylie Zhang** (4/5!)

K-12 Open: 1st Place – **Gordon Xu** (5/5!!)

### **SPFNO Team Awards**

	<b>K-3 Top Teams</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	<b>Open Window</b>	<b>14.5</b>
2	<b>Richmond Chess Champions</b>	<b>14</b>
3	<b>Fernwood Elementary</b>	<b>12</b>
4	<b>Medina Elementary</b>	<b>12</b>
5	<b>Jing Mei Elementary</b>	<b>11.5</b>

	<b>4-6 Top Teams</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	<b>Detective Cookie Chess Club</b>	<b>14</b>
2	<b>Medina Elementary</b>	<b>13.5</b>
3	<b>Evergreen Middle</b>	<b>10.5</b>
4	<b>Cascadia Elementary</b>	<b>10.5</b>
5	<b>Samantha Smith Elementary</b>	<b>10</b>

	<b>7-12 Top Teams</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	<b>Detective Cookie Chess Club</b>	<b>11</b>
2	<b>Odle Middle</b>	<b>10</b>

3	<b>Evergreen Middle</b>	<b>9.5</b>
4	<b>Overlake</b>	<b>7.5</b>
5	<b>NOVA Middle</b>	<b>6</b>

	<b>K-12 Top Teams (2-day)</b>	<b>Score</b>
1	<b>Skyview Middle</b>	<b>14</b>
2	<b>Open Window</b>	<b>13.5</b>
3	<b>Kokanee Elementary</b>	<b>13</b>

### **Parents and Coaches Seminar:**

The first side event to jump start the weekend's action-packed slate of chess activities was the Parents and Coaches Seminar, which took place Salon D of the Grand Ballroom on Saturday, November 22 from 10:15-11:15am. The 1-hour seminar, which was led by Susan Polgar, provided parents and coaches with the opportunity to learn how to effectively guide children on their chess journey. The informal atmosphere was conducive for participants to ask questions, hear tips, and gather insightful feedback from Grandmaster Susan Polgar, who is herself a chess parent, lifelong chess educator, and former coach of the award-winning Webster University Chess Team.

### **Gabby Smiley Face Painting:**

Face painter extraordinaire Gabby Carrillo was on-site on Saturday from 11am-3pm on the Hilton foyer performing enchanting colorful and brilliant face painting designs, much to the delight and amazement of kids and their parents alike! Gabby's inspirational and detailed designs, which she performed non-stop for 4 hours, are simply remarkable. Many happy players could be seen showing off their on-fleek masterpieces, which were proudly displayed on their faces, arms, and even legs! As is often the case when Gabby is around, the line for a complimentary face paint just never seemed to end!

### **SPFNO Girls Workshop:**

The SPFNO Girls Workshop was held on Saturday from 11:15am-12:15pm in Salon D. Special guests SPF Founder GM Susan Polgar and WCF Women's and Girls' Director WFM Chouchan Airapetian hosted the special 1-hour workshop that focused on empowering girls through the game of chess. Workshop attendees enjoyed the interactive presentation and engaging discussion designed to explore how to best support and grow chess for women and girls on the locally, nationally, and even globally. Despite the intended female target audience, several chess dads and male coaches also took part, seeking advice from the experts on the best ways to help

their chess-playing daughters and students continue to grow and thrive in the game of chess and in the game of life.

### **Susan Polgar Book Sale & Signing:**

The Susan Polgar Book Sale & Signing took place on Saturday from 2:00-3:00pm in Salon D and on Sunday from 11:00am – 12:00pm in the Redmond Room. GM Susan Polgar, the author of several books throughout her playing and teaching careers, was on site to sign autographs and take pictures. With the release of her best-selling autobiography Rebel Queen last March, many kids and parents were looking forward to the opportunity to purchase a copy and have it signed by the author! A variety of Susan Polgar books well suited for all levels of players were available for purchase: Rebel Queen, Learn Chess the Right Way, Vols. 1-5, Breaking Through, and A World Champion's Guide to Chess. Those who purchased five books or more received a complimentary SPFNO T-shirt, which were on sale in celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the event. The book sale and signing were tremendously successful, and we'd especially like to thank Megan Lee and her embroidery company for creating our wonderful SPFNO T-shirts!

### **Megan Lee All Comers Blitz:**

On Saturday afternoon from 3:15-4:30pm, players and parents were treated to a special appearance by two-time Washington State Chess Champion FM Megan Lee. Megan, who had been playing in SPICE Cup tournament on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Hilton since Wednesday, took a break from her serious chess competition to play some All Comers Blitz in the Hilton foyer just outside the Redmond room. Several courageous players had the opportunity to challenge Megan Lee to a thrilling game of speed chess! Megan is an avid speed chess player who also enjoys bughouse and other variants. Despite several wild time scrambles and narrow escapes against her daring and tricky challengers, Megan emerged unscathed and made it through the afternoon undefeated!

### **SPFNO Puzzle Solving Competition:**

A total of 31 brave contestants were given a maximum of 30 minutes to solve 20 checkmate puzzles. An original set of challenging puzzles, which included four mates in 1, four mates in 2, six mates in 3, four mates in 4, and two mates in 5, was personally designed by GM Susan Polgar herself especially for this competition. Contestants wrote their solutions on paper and were evaluated based on accuracy, completeness, and speed. A talented group of puzzle-solvers competed in this year's edition, with two contestants earning a perfect score! Especially impressive performances were achieved by Imai Maharaja (1680) of Redmond and Odbayar Yondon (1853) of Sammamish, both of whom scored a perfect 20 points. Congratulations to the winners!

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Time (min.sec)</b>	<b>Prize</b>
Maharaja	Imai	1680	<b>20</b>	13.27	<b>1st 1000+</b>
Yondon	Odbayar	1853	<b>20</b>	17.15	<b>2nd 1000+</b>

Ma	Ziliang	1418	<b>19.5</b>	29.42	<b>3rd 1000+</b>
Rampenthal	Quinn	1421	<b>19</b>	17.08	<b>4th 1000+</b>
Li	Anyi	1336	<b>18</b>	30.00	<b>5th 1000+</b>

Last Name	First Name	Rating	Score	Time (min.sec)	Prize
Qureshi	Haroon	869	<b>14</b>	29.35	<b>1st U1000</b>
Pingale	Sharanya	861	<b>14</b>	30.00	<b>2nd U1000</b>
Banatwala	Kriyaansh	unr.	<b>13.5</b>	30.00	<b>3rd U1000</b>
Coberly	Silas	816	<b>13.5</b>	30.00	<b>4th U1000</b>
Fang	Echo	571	<b>10</b>	30.00	<b>5th U1000</b>

### **SPNFO Blitz Championship:**

The 2025 SPFNO Blitz Championship attracted 39 players and took place on Saturday at 6:30pm in Salons A-C of the Grand Ballroom. The 8-round Single Swiss in two sections, K-5 and 6-12, was directed by FIDE Arbiter Mani Atikankhotchasee and WCF Member-at-Large Ani Barua. The games were USCF Blitz rated with the time control of game in 5 minutes with no delay or increment. In the K-5 section, young Vivaan Sankrithi (7.0, 1<sup>st</sup> Place), a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade homeschooler and member of the WIISER Chess Team, emerged victorious with an impressive 7 points from 8 games! Raymond Zhao (6.0, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place), a fifth grader from Portland, captured 2<sup>nd</sup> Place a full-point back with six points. Third place was awarded to Mingyang Zheng (5.5, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place) from Richmond Chess Champions in British Columbia. Avyaan Roy Chowdhury & Anyi Li (5.0, =4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>) rounded out the K-5 trophy winners. In the 6-12 section, Lincoln High School junior sensation Gavin Shi (7.0, 1<sup>st</sup> Place) of Seattle topped the field with seven points from eight games, dropping only a single point against Californian master Gordon Xu in the 7<sup>th</sup> round! Second place was awarded to Arnav Gadde (6.5, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place), a 7<sup>th</sup> grader from Gateway Middle School in Everett. Inglewood Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> grader Odbayar Yondon (6.0, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place) drew his last two blitz games to finish a point ahead of the chasing pack. A sextuplet of rising chess stars shared =4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> place honors a full point back with five points apiece: Gordon Xu, Aarav B. Mohan, Vishnu Mohan, Joanne Wangluo, Johnny Tan, and Ziliang Ma. Congratulations to the winners!

### **GM Susan Polgar Simul:**

The Susan Polgar Simul took place on Sunday afternoon from 1:00-3:15pm in the Redmond Room. An eclectic mix of 19 audacious scholastic and adult chess warriors took their seats and

squared off with the black pieces against GM Susan Polgar. For most of the simul participants, it was their first time playing against a Grandmaster! After about 2 hours and 15 minutes of play, all the games finished in favor of Susan Polgar, a clean sweep! Although, no wins or draws were achieved this time, the last man standing was young Quinn Rampenthal (1421) of Seattle, who managed to last well into the endgame. Congratulations to the 19 fearless chess gladiators who took part!

<b>Final Score: GM Susan Polgar 19 - Simul Players 0</b>		
<b>Duration: 2 hours, 15 min</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Result</b>
Cedric Davies	1640	1-0
Vidur Ganesan	1638	1-0
Quinn Rampenthal	1421	1-0
Kriyaansh Banatwala	1397	1-0
Tom Jakubowski	1354	1-0
Paul Victor	1300	1-0
Rafael Frenk	1229	1-0
Blaise Fredette	1113	1-0
Clara Dragusanu	1036	1-0
Ishaan Mandore	1009	1-0
Vitality Astafiev	938	1-0
Olga Astafyeva	812	1-0
Lucas Shing	793	1-0
Ary Cheng	731	1-0
Daichi Isami	665	1-0
Echo Fang	571	1-0
Mi-Le Jakubowski	546	1-0

Leonard Berg	400	1-0
Pi Nouveau	343	1-0

Congratulations to all players and chess families who contributed to this year's SPFNO. We look forward to the continued growth and success of this event in the years to come!

### **About SPFNO**

The prestigious annual Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls and Boys (SPFNO) was created in 2006 and is sponsored by the Susan Polgar Foundation (SPF) to give more opportunities to young chess players. The event rotates throughout the United States and has been co-hosted by the Susan Polgar Foundation and the Washington Chess Federation since 2020. For more information, please visit: <https://www.spfno.com/>.

### **About Susan Polgar Foundation**

The Susan Polgar Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported by charitable donations. The Foundation was established by GM Susan Polgar – Hall of Famer, the Winner of 4 Women's World Chess Championships, 12 Olympic Medals (5 Gold, 4 Silver, 3 Bronze), and the first woman in history to break the gender barrier in chess. Since the foundation was started in 2002, many tournaments have blossomed and become benchmark events for young girls and boys throughout North America.

### **Contact**

To learn more about this event, please contact:

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