

Change in Format to Determine The Utah State Chess Champion

Throughout the year we have state titled events such as the Blitz Championship, Game/60, Quick, Amateur and especially the Utah Open Championship. We also recognize the Utah High School Champion as a state title holder who consequently officially represents Utah and its sanctioning body, the UCA, at the Denker tournament of champions. All of these individuals, together with the winners of the other UCA sponsored/sanctioned state tournaments, are legitimate champions, but the State Chess Champion has been determined at the Utah Open for the last decade or so. In 2011 an unprecedented four players tied for first at this event, with Vanel Sanchez going home with the trophy via a blitz playoff. Jeff Phillips took clear first place at the Closed Championship the following month, making him our 2008 Utah Closed Champion. The Utah Open has been the principal venue because more money was available via entry fees for prizes and trophies and so players outside the Wasatch Front, such as Igor Ivanov when he was alive, were more prone to participate in this than in the Utah Closed which paid comparatively little, had smaller trophies, and still has consistently operated in the red.

The change, approved by the UCA Board, commencing in 2011 is to return to having the Utah State Champion determined via the Utah Closed Championship. In addition to qualifying to compete in the Closed by virtue of one's rating—likely all those above 1800, although 1900 and 2000 have also been used as qualifying gates in the past—winners of *all individual* State titled events will also be invited to participate in the closed. Each year, we've invited the Amateur Champion and the Women's Champion (Top Female in the Utah Open) to participate in the closed. The following are the guidelines determining eligibility for the State Championship as voted on by the board at the May 29, 2014 UCA board meetings and documented in the minutes taking effect for the 2014 State Championship.

5.B. Eligibility Criteria for 2014 Utah State Championship

There followed a discussion of eligibility criteria for the 2014 State Championship tournament, after which discussion, upon motion duly made, the Board voted 6-1 (with David Day voting "nay"), to approve the following resolution:

"Those eligible for the 2014 Utah State Championship tournament will be players meeting any one (or more) of the following criteria:

“(1A) a regular USCF rating equal to or greater than 1800 (including a provisional regular rating, provided it is based on at least twelve [12] games) either (a) published in any monthly rating supplement during 2014; or (b) appearing as the post-event rating in the crosstable for any USCF tournament played during 2014, as published on-line in the MSA section of the USCF website; and/or

“(1B) a published standard FIDE rating equal to or greater than 1800 as of the date of the tournament; and/or

“(2) sole or shared first place in the top section of any tournament (except as specifically excluded below) sponsored or sanctioned by the UCA during the 2014 calendar year, including, without limitation (a) the 2014 Women’s State Champion; (b) the 2014 Speed and Blitz Champions; (c) the 2014 High School Champion; and (d) the 2014 Utah Amateur Champion; and/or

“(3) a score of at least 3.5/5 in the top section of the 2014 Utah Open Championship.

“***Notwithstanding any other provisions or terms of this resolution***, the respective winners of (I) the sixth-grade section of the 2014 State Elementary Championships;

(II) the 2014 Junior High School Championship; and (III) the 2014 Barber Final [Round-Robin] Qualifier tournament will ***not ipso facto*** qualify for the 2014 Utah State Championship tournament.”

Mr. Day explained that his vote “nay” on this motion was primarily due to his opposition to increasing the qualifying score at the Utah Open to at least 3.5/5 for 2014, from any “plus” score (at least 3.0/5), as had been applicable for 2013.