

Washington Elementary Chess Champions Accomplishments through October 2005

“Washington Elementary Chess Champions” (WECC) incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of Washington on December 2, 2002, and organized the 2003 Washington State Elementary Chess Championship Tournament, in Kennewick, April 12, 2003, where 750 students that qualified in local tournaments from around the State, in grades K-6, participated. With the generous donations which were received, WECC has been able to donate chess equipment to help many elementary schools in the Tri-Cities area, establish chess clubs. Examples of the letters of thanks received from some of these schools are available on request.

WECC also provided assistance to other organizations in providing chess educational events. The Richland Public Library with WECC assistance held Summer Chess Classes in 2004 and 2005. The Columbia Center Mall was able to hold a chess event through their Kidgits program with WECC assistance, and a local group held a mini chess tournament for families here in Richland. (See attached flyers and thank you note).

In addition WECC has established a web presence at www.chesschampions.org which provides event schedules, and helpful materials for establishing chess clubs in Elementary Schools. WECC has assisted and continues to support the local chess tournaments which encourage students to improve their chess education and practice their analytical thinking skills in well organized local chess tournaments (6 local events / year).

At this point every public elementary school and most private elementary schools in Richland, have established chess programs. Most Pasco Elementary schools now have a chess program, and others are following. Currently only 2 Kennewick Elementary Schools have chess programs. WECC has compiled a list of contacts and during the next year, expects to offer assistance to all of these in an effort to help them establish chess programs.

The 2003 State tournament provided an example which established a more professional, more organized atmosphere in the State level tournaments. This has encouraged more students to participate in local tournaments. As a result, 1000 K-6 students participated in the 2004 and over 1100 participated in the 2005 State level tournament. At the bid presentation for the 2006 tournament, the coaches voted unanimously to allow WECC to organize the event, at the new Tri-Cities Convention Center in Kennewick.

Some of the professional features that stand as an example to subsequent State tournaments include: 1) telephone check in, 2) Grade level sections with a dedicated computer, printer, and pairing guy, per section, 3) Information desk, 4) team and Vendor tables with a map in the program, 5) Personal bags grouped in team bags or boxes, 6) supervised outdoor activities between rounds, 6) formal bid presentation and Rules presentation the night before and the morning of the tournament, 7) Formal coaches meeting with required cards for voting, 8) Volunteers easily identified by their “Volunteer T-shirts”, and 9) A Website listing qualified, and registered players, and local hotels. Many of these were firsts, and most have been duplicated in subsequent State Tournaments.

WECC has made a difference in our community, and has set a new higher standard for the State, encouraging more students, to learn chess and improve their analytical thinking skills.