

## 2025 SENIOR COMMITTEE REPORT

MICHAEL MULFORD, CHAIR

A record 52 senior state champions squared off in the 6<sup>th</sup> annual John T. Irwin Tournament of Senior State Champions. IM Nikoloz Managadze, who shared the title last year, won outright this time by a full point with a 5½-½ score. IM's Tim Taylor, Oladapu Adu, Alexander Matros and Igor Khmelnitsky and FM Doug Eckert shared 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> place prize money. GM Larry Kaufman won the special prize for top player over 75. In addition to the competitive awards, certificates were awarded to four players who competed in their 5<sup>th</sup> Irwin. GM John Fedorowicz, OLM Nels Truelson, NM Alaa-Addin Moussa and Daniel Joelson achieved that milestone. This recognition was initiated last year, and the National Invitationals Committee has followed our lead by awarding certificates to people who have played in five Invitationals of any kind.

The Senior Committee has always made every effort to ensure each of the 52 states has a representative, although we never exceeded 44. This year we found nominees for all 52 states, although the Alaska rep was unable to come at the last minute. No Invitational has ever had a nominee for every state until now. We are also pleased to note that for the 2025 Irwin, New York and Southern California held their first senior-only qualifier in the Irwin era, while Maryland and Delaware also awarded their spot by competition for the first time, using their state championship as a qualifier. This writer for one is pleased to see the continued increase in competitive qualifiers rather than appointment to select a representative. As of this writing, there are still a few states yet to schedule their events, but only nine states have not held a qualifying event during the Irwin era. These are almost all states with fewer U. S. Chess members.

The 2024 U.S. Senior Open, held in the Chicago area for the third straight year, drew 94 players. Grandmasters Alex Fishbein and Dmitry Gurevich shared first place with 5-1 scores. NM Alexey Root and WCM Carla Naylor were the top scoring women, with Root earning a seed in the U. S. Women's Senior Championship. The same organizers will run the 2025 U.S. Senior Open.

Since IM Nikoloz does not have a FIDE flag of USA, he was not eligible to be seeded into the U. S. Senior Championship. As our Invitational rules do not permit seeding runners-up, for the second straight year no one will be seeded from the Irwin. Ironically, an identical situation existed with the U. S. Open winner, but the rules were hastily changed to allow runner-up GM Awonder Liang to be seeded to the U. S. Championship. No such change was made for the U.S. Senior Championship. Much time was spent at the Senior workshop to make recommendations on changes going forward, and the Senior Committee crafted a recommendation motion for the Executive Board. The Executive Board passed a similar motion which clarified the process when the same person won both events and allowing a runner-up to be seeded when no champion or co-champion is eligible.

The second U.S. Senior Women's Championship was held as a 12 player, 5 round Swiss, and I was fortunate enough to be able to attend. NM Natalya Tsodikova scored 4½ points, a full point ahead of 2024 champion WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia and WCM Mary Kuhner. The Senior Committee is delighted this event continues and hopes for the day when the Senior Women's Championship can be held on an equal footing to the U. S. Senior Championship. We are grateful to David and Maureen Grimaud for their sponsorship and for the incredible job Maureen did putting together a memorable event.