



ABOVE, HIKARU NAKAMURA AND MAYOR MIKE RYAN PRESENT A TROPHY TO MCKHAILA MCKENZIE AT A CITY-SPONSORED CHESS TOURNAMENT PRODUCED BY THE NSCF. BELOW, SUNIL TEACHES A *DEMISTIFYING CHESS* WORKSHOP TO TEACHERS AND YOUTH MENTORS FROM ACROSS BROWARD COUNTY. OPPOSITE, SUNIL PRESENTS A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER ANTHONY BELIARD. *Photos courtesy of NSCF.*

play chess so that the officers can have more positive interactions with the young people in the neighborhoods they patrol.

They both speak of how chess has led to improved relations with the police and given young people in Sunrise a positive activity beyond more traditional sports.

“The main benefit? Confidence, to be quite honest with you,” Hylton said of what chess has done for young people in Sunrise who begin to learn how to play the game more skillfully.

McKenzie says chess has brought a sense of excitement to Sunrise.

“It’s bringing chess to a larger population of people,” McKenzie said.

Weeramantry says local individuals are essential to establishing a chess program in any community.

“The first thing you need for something like this is someone on the inside who is a member of the community and [who] can actually be an advocate within the community for what you are doing in schools,” Weeramantry said.

Another critical element is to remove cost as a barrier. “Everything we do is free, thanks to the support of our funders,” said McLellan, who serves as director of communications and development at the NSCF.

And to think it all started with the drop of a hockey puck. ♠

To learn more about the programs in Sunrise and across Broward County, visit sunrisechesscenter.org. The NSCF also welcomes partner inquiries to bring this to new communities nationwide; write to robert@nscfchess.org.



FACES ACROSS THE BOARD

By AL LAWRENCE

FRED WILSON

NEW YORK, NEW YORK



Making master after 70

Fred Wilson has a system for making master in your 70s. At least it worked for him.

Back in 1961, the year teenage Bobby Fischer gave notice by rocking Soviet champs at the Bled interzonal, Fred scored 3-3 at the New York City Junior Championship, receiving an initial rating of 1704. “And I won the Best Played Game Prize, awarded by GM Bill Lombardy!” After finishing high school, Wilson reached a US Chess high of 2189. He went on in 1973 to found Fred Wilson Books and become an important fixture in American chess as antiquarian and author.

But he never quite made national master. “I was always bothered by that fact.”

So he decided he’d make a final push. His approach reckoned with the realities of age—while making use of the patience time brought him. In 2010, after not playing tournaments for a decade, he began the quest, competing in several four-round, Game/60 tournaments each year in New Jersey, “Where I have many friends.” He picked a place with people with whom he felt comfortable—that makes sense. But why such a fast pace?

“I like game in 60 minutes because I know my openings pretty well by now (!) and I know each ‘struggle’ cannot last longer than two hours. I usually take a bye in the first round and am prepared to play six hours of real chess.”

It took Wilson seven years, until October 1, to earn the necessary 151 rating points. “Since I am very stubborn by nature—I used to run marathons—it never occurred to me to stop trying.” Records are sketchy, but Fred is likely second-oldest and has a claim to be the oldest ever to manage this feat. He edged out Bernard Friend, since Fred was a few months older when hitting 2200. Oscar Shapiro broke the barrier at the age of 74, but, born in 1910, Shapiro was very likely master strength before US Chess first rated players in 1950. So let’s at least give Fred the asterisk.

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