

Shimer Chess Tournament Plays Out Nicely

After two months of exciting play, Meg Nelson, a home-schooled freshman from Aurora, Illinois, defeated John Terhune, a junior from Middletown, Ohio in the championship match of Shimer's Fall 2007 Chess Tournament. Weekend student Terry Baker, a junior from Chicago, finished third, with yet another junior, Tory Helgeson from Kenosha, Wisconsin, picking up fourth prize. The tournament was directed by Academic Dean David Shiner.

About her first Shimer chess tournament experience, winner Meg Nelson said, "I've been in chess tournaments before, but my opponents were so serious about it. This was a lot more fun. It's totally Shimer. You win, you lose, it doesn't matter as long as you learn something."

Shimer has a long chess tradition, dating to the mid-1980s when chess master and local chess organizer Kevin Bachler directed the Shimer chess club. The triumphs of Shimer's chess team over the years include a first-place finish in their section of the prestigious Pan-American games in 1991. That team was led by Jesse Kraai, then a sophomore who eventually went on to earn a Ph.D. in the Philosophy of Science. Earlier this year, Kraai qualified to become one of the few International Grandmasters in the chess world.

This semester's Shimer Chess Tournament boasted 15 entries, 14 from students and one from staff member Zachary Hamm, a 2007 Shimer graduate. The vast majority of those entrants completed all their games, and all of them earned prizes for doing so. Nelson, as the only undefeated player in the tournament, was a worthy champion. The rest of the chess-playing student body will doubtless be taking aim at her – in a friendly way, of course – when next semester's tournament comes around.