

# 2014 Alabama Dual-Rated Championships

The Alabama Dual-Rated Championships were held at Evangel Church in Montgomery. The tournament was organized by Evangel Chess Club and directed by Doug Strout. 27 players competed in three sections: Open, U1800, and U1200.

2013 Open Champion Scott Varagona dropped an early half-point to Stephen Graveling but rallied to a successful title defense, winning the 2014 title in a final-round battle with 2012 Alabama Dual Champion Rex Blalock. A-player Jonathan Rasberry finished the morning with the only Open perfect score of 2.0/2 before ultimately settling for a second-place tie.

Jerome Flowers won the U1800 Championship by tiebreak over co-champion William Sherrill despite a final-round loss to Jayashree Sekar of Georgia, who finished in a three-way tie for first with Jerome and William. 2013 champion Neil Dietsch, whose title defense was greatly complicated by the redrawing of section boundaries, got off to a rollicking start with two early wins against B-players but ran out of gas in the afternoon rounds. Neil still finished with a nice rating boost.

The U1200 had seven players, four of whom were unrated, so no one really knew what to expect. The section was won by newcomer Jacob Hayes of Florida, and the U1200 Alabama Championship was awarded to Esther Graveling on tiebreak over co-champion Roger Richardson.

No player in any section finished with 4.0/4, and only two finished with 3.5/4.

Thanks to all the players for supporting the event, and congratulations to the winners:

## OPEN SECTION

ALABAMA CHAMPION: Scott Varagona

2<sup>nd</sup> place & U2000 prize: Rex Blalock, Jonathan Rasberry, Stephen Graveling, and Kevin Wang

## U1800 SECTION

ALABAMA CHAMPION: Jerome Flowers  
Alabama co-champion: William Sherrill  
Also tied for first place: Jayashree Sekar (Georgia)

U1500 prize winner: Bob Buchanan

## U1200 SECTION

Section winner: Jacob Hayes (Florida)

2<sup>nd</sup> place & U1000 prize: Esther Graveling (ALABAMA CHAMPION) and Roger Richardson (Alabama co-champion)

The use of increment time in the tournament was new to the players, but its implementation was successful and moves the ACF beyond the theoretical discussion at Queen of Hearts into the realm of experience. Some players in time trouble were able to hang in there longer than they otherwise would have. Game/45 + 10 seconds seemed to work well, and with a relaxed tournament schedule, the final round actually started about 10 minutes earlier than the posted time.

Evangel Chess Club will again feature increment time (Game/75 + 10 seconds) at the Evangel Hexagonal on September 13. Think of it as warm-up for State two weeks later.

The Chris Bond Memorial will be held on August 9 in Montgomery.

Pensacola Chess Club wants to spread the word that they are becoming more active in tournament organizing. The Pensacola Knights Open was held on July 19 (I finished T-4<sup>th</sup>), and they are holding the Panhandle Open on October 4. This should be of interest, especially to those Alabamians in the southern part of the state.