



Sheriff Grady Judd Flags Open the 30th Polk Scholastic Chess Championship Tournament

The Polk Scholastic Chess **Championship Tournament** for season 2017-18 had a sparkling start with **Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd** opening the 30th Championship tournament! The event was conducted at Bartow Civic Center on Saturday, March 10, 2018, and the tournament hall was packed with over **480 qualifying chess players** (out of 580 registered players), their parents and chess coaches. The presence of Sheriff Judd was inspiring to the players and the entire “**chess family**” including volunteers, coaches and parents welcomed him with warm hearts and sincere gratitude for his devoted service to Polk County.

Sheriff Grady Judd promised the parents and coaches that the sheriff's office will do everything in their power to keep our kids safe. To the young players, his message was *"At the end of the day, I hope you all have fun today. You are already winners.... Compete, be honest and ethical, but more than anything, dream your dreams and work towards them. And you can attain them..."*. Sheriff Judd graciously joined scores of volunteers for a “chess family photo”, presented the certificates and medals to winners and then joined the volunteer team for a small celebration.



“We conclude our 2017-18 Scholastic Chess Season with a special note of thanks to the wonderful teachers and coaches from Polk County schools, volunteers and parents” said Mr. Malay Shah, President, Polk Scholastic Chess “Without the help of such dedicated chess family members, this non-profit organization could not have sustained its scholastic operations for three decades”. Each year, Polk Scholastic Chess recognizes a person who has contributed exceptionally towards our mission. This year the “**Richard Lewis Lifetime Achievement Award**” was given to **Ms. Maria Gallo**, a former Polk Scholastic Chess board member and Bartow lawyer, for her long service to the board. The afternoon awards ceremony was graced by **Mr. Victor Adler**, an International Master (age 67, Ukraine, Siberia and Minnesota). Mr. Adler came from Daytona Beach Shores for this event and we thank him for his time and encouragement to kids. Trophies were awarded to top players in each grade, top improved players, best teams of the season and

for participation in the tournament.

POLK SCHOLASTIC CHESS COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP awards were announced by Ms. Arlene Gable, Board Member since 2006 and Secretary: We recognize two graduating seniors with scholarships towards their continuing education each year. These students need to have an extended length of participation with Polk Scholastic Chess, win our essay contest and must have made active contributions to their school and community. The PSC board sends out the essays to independent judges so there is no question of favoritism. The judging criteria includes grammar, syntax, vocabulary, extracurricular activities, community service and number of years with Polk Scholastic Chess. This year the six scholarship applications from four schools were judged by Mr. Anuj Saran (Assistant Principal of Operations and IB, Lake Wales High School), Carol Borders (Previous Principal Bartow Elementary Academy) and Dr. David Foster (Associate Professor of Computer Engineering, Florida Polytechnic University).

The two winners of this year's Polk Scholastic Chess Scholarship were **SHULAGRA SHAH** (first place, with 25/30 points) and **ARMAND CENIZA** (Second Place (with 20/30 points)).

We would like to congratulate the Top Winners in the five divisions:

GUPPY CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS:

1. **JOHAN BIJIYOS** (Lincoln Avenue Academy)
2. **NICHOLAS HARRISON** (McKeel Academy Central)
3. **ARNAV GUPTA** (Lincoln Avenue Academy)

PRIMARY CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS:

1. **LAITH KAZMIER** (Lincoln Avenue Academy)
2. **TZAK LAU** (All Saints Academy)
3. **NATHAN CHOPPARA** (Lincoln Avenue Academy)

ELEMENTARY CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS:

1. **JAKOB DIAZ** (Brigham Academy)
2. **SOHAM PATEL** (Valleyview Elementary)
3. **BENJAMIN RAFOOL** (All Saints Academy)

MIDDLE CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS:

1. **LUKE HAMILTON** (Mulberry Middle)
2. **NIRIHAM SHAH** (Union Academy)
3. **SACHIN SIVAKUMAR** (Lawton Chiles Middle Academy)

SENIORS CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS:

1. **OCTAVIO VAZQUEZ** (Kathleen High School)
2. **CAEDEN DEBOER** (Independent Player)
3. **SHULAGRA SHAH** (Bartow IB)

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