

Chess tourney challenges players

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER, Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, February 9, 2016 9:00 am

EPHRATA — Chess, said Lucas Tucker, involves keeping your eye on the board. He lost his first-round game at the Waypoint Chess Tournament Saturday because he didn't, he said.

His opponent "got me in checkmate. I wasn't paying attention," Lucas said.

That's the thing about chess, said Ryan Pugh, a former winner of the tournament and the son of one of the organizers. "The tides of the game – they change just like that." One minute he might be winning, one or two moves later he might be losing, he said.

"It's kind of relaxing," said Connor Quist, Ryan's friend and fellow chess guy, and Ryan agreed with that characterization. "It's a way to be relaxed and work your mind at the same time," Ryan said.

The tournament is open to children and teens, kindergarteners through high school seniors, in the Ephrata, Moses Lake, Quincy and Soap Lake school districts. Enough kids signed up to fill 50 chessboards set up in the lunchroom at Parkway Elementary in Ephrata.

Quincy Junior High brought the chess club. Vanessa Hernandez got an invitation to come to a chess club meeting and liked what she found. "It's mostly a mental game. It makes you think," she said.

"I love seeing what other people's strategies are and how they use it against their opponent. I love thinking what move they're going to make next," said Francisco Javier Ramirez, who's also in the QJHS chess club.

Yeah, but it can be tough. As the competitors crowded around before the second round, one player could be overheard saying to another, "I hope I lose. Then I don't have to go against the hard people."

Anna Raine got interested in chess back in December when the 2016 tournament was announced. It's an interesting game – but it can be hard, especially when playing against older kids, Anna



Waypoint Foundation Chess Tournament

Players filled the Parkway Elementary lunchroom Saturday for the 10th annual Waypoint Foundation Chess Tournament.

said. But Anna and her friends kept trying – were clustered around a chessboard while they waited for the second round games.

The tournament celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2016, and qualifying players received a T-shirt in celebration.

The tournament was founded by Roger and Troy Pugh, in memory of their brother Ryan who was killed in a car accident in 2001. It's sponsored by the Waypoint Foundation, founded by the Pugh brothers with the goal of supporting character-building activities for youth.

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