



## MetroWest Chess Club

Largest Chess Club in New England

Serving the Metrowest Boston chess community since 1983

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### Monthly Event:

This month's event is a **five** week tournament.

- Round 1 is Tuesday May 3rd

Sections with less than 8 players may be merged with another section

Due to the constraints of our playing site, all events at our current location are:

G/60; d5 dual-rated

Registration closes at 7:20 pm. If you arrive after that you may not be paired. We must be strict due to having to exit the building promptly at 10:00 pm.

### **Recent trends:**

It's been a little over a year since we were forced to change from our traditional "slow" time control to Game 60. Our monthly attendance average dropped from 82 players which we've been at for many years to 72 players. While this is certainly significantly lower than the 82 or more players we're used to having for the previous 12 years, we feel that this still reflects a very healthy size for a week night chess club.

We've had a number of people notice and provide concern or thoughts about the ever decreasing size of the U1400 Section.

### **Is this really a problem?**

The short answer: No, not really

- Overall Event attendance is what we expect and still healthy
- Many people, for now, are choosing to play in the U1700 section when they don't have to
- Only pairing the U1400 section presents logistical issue and less variety of players as opponents

For the longer answer, read on.

### **Some Background Information:**

Since first going to four sections back in 2003 the distribution of players among the four sections would generally follow the pattern of the top and bottom sections being about the same size but being less than the middle two sections. An example of this would be:

- Open 15 players
- U2000 25 players
- U1700 25 players
- U1400 15 players

In July of 2009 after trying various combinations of section breaks for the four sections we determined that varying the breaks didn't have any measurable positive impact so we fixed the section breaks to those we have now and have to date not found sufficient reason to change them. Until this last year the breaks have seemed very satisfactory and allowed us to continue to present our play offering in a consistent and predictable manner. We learned early on that consistency in everything we do helps promote a positive playing experience for our members.

We present four sections with 300 point breaks between sections to provide a competitive section without such a wide swing in ratings that games would tend to be too lop-sided.

We feel it is important to provide a section such as the U1400 section for those new to rated chess, beginners and those who have not yet passed the 1400 mark yet.

Typically there are 3 or 4 players who choose to play up into the next section.

**Can the low attendance of the U1400 section be improved by adjusting the section breaks?**

If we look at April 2016 which had the smallest bottom section attendance we've had since going to four sections:

- 17 players chose to play in the U1700 section that could have remained in the U1400 section.

Clearly the low attendance in the U1400 section isn't because it is too "tough" as people are opting to play 1500s and 1600s.

If we account for about 3 players from the U1400 playing up and the same for the U1700 playing up, instead of:

- U1700: 33 players and U1400: 4 players

we would have seen:

- U1700: 19 players and U1400: 19 players give or take a few

People are choosing to play up.

We could NOT let people play up and then we'd have about 17 unhappy players.

What we have not heard, at least so far is anything along the lines of: "I'd like tougher competition but not as tough as 1600 players". If we start hearing that then it might make sense to have the U1400 section be U1600 or even U1500. That doesn't leave much room for an U1700 section to have people to play against. This opens the door to changing the U2000 section

break which has an entirely different set of considerations.

### **Conclusions that we have for now**

- Our overall attendance is good
- Our distribution between the sections are off
  - This is due to an unusually high number of players playing up from the bottom section
- We need to have a lower section, even if it is poorly attended for beginners and the lower rated players
- Having a relatively large number of people in the U1700 section means that it may be less likely to have clear place winners. Notice however that for April, with 33 players and four rounds:
  - 1 player with a perfect score, clear first place
  - 2 player half a point behind, clear second place
  - 3 players 1 point behind, 3 way tie for third place
- We are still not convinced that preventing people from playing up will be more positive then negative for the health of the club and the happiness of our players.
- We do not yet see how changing the section breaks will result in happier players.



**Summer Chess Session(Scholastic Chess Classes)**

The class is for students in elementary and middle school students, and is offered at two levels:

- Chess I - for beginners
- Chess II - for intermediate/advanced players (requires approval of the Chess Master).

More detail, signup information and background of our Masters can be found at:

- [www.metrowestschool.com/chess.html](http://www.metrowestschool.com/chess.html)

Contact us at [info@metrowestschool.com](mailto:info@metrowestschool.com) for questions and inquiries.



**New England Chess School (Scholastic Chess Classes)**

After school & Weekend chess classes

- Enriched after-school and weekend activity for elementary school aged children.
- All levels are welcome from beginners to already serious tournament player

For more information:

<http://www.chessne.com/>

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