

INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY · CENTRAL LIBRARY

BOOKS & ROOKS DAY OF CHESS

RECAP BY NIKHIL MURUGAN

JULY 25, 2026

On July 25th, the IndyPL Central Library hosted its second Books & Rooks Day of Chess, and it was bigger and better than the first edition back in March 2025. Organized and sponsored by IndyPL Central Library, the event brought together over 160 players, families, coaches, and volunteers for a full day of free chess, open to all ages, from 10:30 AM to 5:00 PM in the library's grand atrium and meeting rooms.



DAY AT A GLANCE



10:30 AM – 5:00 PM

25+5 time control, all sections



4 Sections

Rated Scholastic, Rated Open, Unrated Open & GM Simul



Free for Everyone

Free entry, t-shirts, trophies & parking



Central Library Atrium

40 E St Clair St, Indianapolis

A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE LIBRARY STAFF



None of this happens without the incredible team at IndyPL. A huge thank you to Jordan Hunt and Charlie Cain, along with the rest of the IndyPL staff, including Caden Potter, Carrie Genovese, Mitchell, Kayla Duff, Jared Reid, Dr. Lisa Riolo, Leah Kim, Elizabeth Schoettle, and Jason Davis, for their hard work in making this event possible. They made a genuinely complex event look effortless. There were enough staff on hand to keep every room running smoothly, parking was free for everyone who came out, and the library covered certificates, trophies, and free t-shirts for participants, all at no cost to families. This was a fully free tournament, sponsored end to end by the library, with a visible intention to grow the game of chess in the community.

The library staff planned this event thoughtfully, with every section split across its own space so players could focus: the two rated sections each had their own dedicated room, the unrated section had its own space, and the Grand Simul with a real Grandmaster took over the library's grand atrium for an unforgettable centerpiece to the day. From check-in and walk-in registrations to distributing t-shirts, arranging tables and chairs, setting up boards, making announcements, having a volunteer stationed in each room to keep an eye on the games, handling prize distribution, and tearing everything down at the end, they were prepared for absolutely everything. They went above and beyond to make this a memorable event, and it truly showed in every detail.

Thank you again for everything you do to bring chess to our community.

THANK YOU, GM SAM KHANIN



A special thank you goes to Grandmaster Sam Khanin, who volunteered his time to take on 30 challengers at once in a simultaneous exhibition spanning beginners to expert-level players. Watching a GM move from board to board across the atrium, thinking on his feet against so many opponents at once, was a highlight for players and spectators alike and a lot of fun for everyone involved. Congratulations to Books & Rooks regular Arth for securing a draw against GM Khanin!

Just one week earlier, GM Khanin also volunteered his time for a simul in support of Checkmate Cancer 2026, organized by the American Cancer Society Club at Carmel High School. He is a true Grandmaster, generous with his time in support of good causes and always ready to help promote the game of chess, and we are fortunate to have him as an Indiana resident.

BY THE NUMBERS

160+

REGISTERED PLAYERS

200+

WITH CASUAL GAMES

30

SIMUL CHALLENGERS

Across the GM Simul, Rated Scholastic, Rated Open, and Unrated sections, total participation topped 160 players, and that doesn't even include the casual games played by spectators and parents throughout the day. Adding a Grandmaster simul to the lineup this year gave the event an entirely new dimension and clearly helped it grow, both in turnout and in energy.

BEHIND THE BOARDS

Running an event of this size takes a real team. Nikhil Murugan served as Chief TD for the rated sections, keeping pairings, ratings, and results running smoothly across two rooms. Jordan Hunt and Charlie Cain handled the unrated section and the GM Simul, making sure both moved at a great pace for players of every experience level. Players in the rated section were given the option to take a half-point bye in Round 3 to participate in the GM Simul.

Coach Colin Hargreaves and Coach Thomas Burden also lent their time and expertise throughout the day, and their help was a big part of what made the event feel so well supported from open to close.



TOURNAMENT WINNERS

Congratulations to all our players, participants, and parents for making it such a fantastic day of chess!

RATED OPEN

1ST **Arslan Jumaniyazov** (4/4, a perfect score)

2ND Mohamed Elshazly (3.0, won 5-way tiebreak)

3RD Patrick Kidwell (3.0, won 5-way tiebreak)

ALSO AT 3.0 Madison Brown, Jacob Maynard, and Thomas Zhu





RATED SCHOLASTIC WINNERS

SECTION 1

- 1st Rohan Arun
- 2nd Aarush Dolli
- 3rd Ivan Lu

SECTION 2

- 1st Adam Li
- 2nd Maryam J.
- 3rd Aaradhya Dolli

SECTION 3

- 1st Zachery Walker
- 2nd Ian Li
- 3rd Yuvaan K.

SECTION 4

- 1st Luke Hardesty
- 2nd Kanishk S.
- 3rd Aron Li

SCHOLASTIC WINNERS

SECTION 1



SECTION 2



SECTION 3



SECTION 4





UNRATED OPEN WINNERS

1ST Redman Mcnamara

2ND Wyatt Revalee

3RD Arth MainDarkar

4TH Cornell Stokes

5TH Randy Piotrowski

RAFFLE WINNER Eileen Chao

UNRATED SECTION WINNERS



PHOTO CREDIT: INDYPL STAFF & MURUGAN CHANDRASEKARAN

A GROWING REACH

This year's tournament reach went beyond Indiana. Two players made the trip in from Ohio and Kentucky, and a special thank you goes to Julian Schmidt and his dad, who drove all the way from West Virginia just so Julian could be part of the day. That kind of dedication says a lot about what this event has become.

Perhaps the best story of the day belongs to Nivid Bhargav, who came to play in the Unrated section but got curious about the rated tournament happening next door. He signed up for a US Chess membership on the spot after Round 2, jumped into a couple of rated games, and won his very first rated tournament game.

COME FOR THE CHESS, STAY FOR THE COMMUNITY

That was the promise on the flyer, and it held up. Between free entry, free t-shirts for the first fifty players to sign in, trophies for the top finishers in the Scholastic section, and IndyPL Book & Rooks apparel for top finishers in both the Rated and Unrated sections, this was a tournament built to welcome newcomers and reward the players who showed up ready to compete.

This has already become an annual tradition. After last year's Day of Chess and Blitz tournament, the next Books & Rooks Day of Chess is already on the calendar for **Saturday, October 17, 2026**, back at IndyPL Central Library.



WIN OR LEARN, AND SEE YOU AT THE NEXT TOURNAMENT!

Learn more at indypl.org • Books & Rooks on Facebook (facebook.com/groups/1352451516639106) •
Summit Chess Club: summitchessclub.com & Facebook (facebook.com/summitchessclub)

SAVE THE DATE

The next Books & Rooks Day of Chess is **Saturday, October 17, 2026** at IndyPL Central Library. Scan for the official USCF tournament listing.

