

THE FRAMINGHAM CHESS CLUB

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PRESS RELEASE

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SHAW WINS FRAMINGHAM CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP IN UNPRECEDENTED SWEEP

National Master Alan Shaw of Somerville won the 1988 Framingham Chess Club Championship, ending May 24, to become the club's fifth champion. Shaw scored a perfect 6-0, the first in the history of the always ferociously-contested event. Finishing equal second at 5-1 were David Ferreira of Watertown and John Fanning of Scituate, with Drew Sarkisian of Oxford, James Matthews of Dedham, and Rob Huntington of Wayland equal fourth at 4.5-1.5.

With Fanning claiming a share of second, the Under-2000 prize was divided eight ways, among Mike Grant of Somerville, William G. Michael of West Bridgewater, Jorge Godoy of Framingham, Larry Eldridge of Newton, Slawomir Luczak of Worcester, Adam Bemporad of Newton, Svein Abrahamsen of Natick, and Ralph Schinzel of Holliston, all at 4-2. (Experts Bruce Downing of Foxboro and John Neville of Nashua NH also finished 4-2.) First Under-1750 was Bob Oakley of Newton with 3.5-2.5, while the Under-1500 prize was divided three ways, among Jeffry Gibson of Sudbury, Kenneth Cooper of Millbury, and Rich O'Keeffe of Watertown.

Shaw, the top-seed, defeated William McAllister of Framingham and Eldridge in the first two rounds, and recovered from a rocky start to down Joe Pineau of Natick in the third. Shaw then outgunned Godoy in the fourth, but barely extracted a win from a queen ending against Michael in the fifth round. Sarkisian, the 1985 co-champion and second-seeded player, had slipped off the pace with a draw in the first round against David Faramarzpour of Sudbury, before reeling off four wins in the middle rounds, the last two against Experts Rob Huntington and John Neville. Sarkisian thus came into the final round trailing Shaw by a half-point, but with White against Shaw in the final round.

In the decisive game, Shaw transposed into the Dutch Defense and generated a standard king-side attack against Sarkisian, who kept the game very closed: no pawns were exchanged until move 35. While Sarkisian's forte is closed positions, in this game he became exceedingly cramped trying to restrain Shaw's

kingside breakthrough. First Shaw, and then Sarkisian, drifted into time-trouble, producing a flurry of moves at the flag: the players in fact played on to move 45 before realizing they had made the time control at the 40th move. During the scramble both players also left en prise strategic pawns. As the second time control began, however, it was clear that Shaw had forced a decisive breakthrough, and he went on to force the win of a piece on move 52, and so clinch the club title.

One of the wildest games of the tournament occurred on board two in the final round, in which Fanning dropped a piece on move 5, but proceeded to complicate the game so enormously (by move 30 the position resembled a composed problem) that Downing lost the thread of the game, losing back the piece and transposing to an untenable endgame. (Having been knocked out of the Mark Bond Classic by Fanning six months ago, Downing sadly commented after the game that he was determined to make Fanning an Expert yet.) Thus the irrepressible Fanning, who had previously defeated Ferreira and suffered his only defeat at the hands of William Michael, cliched a share of second place, despite being only the fifteenth-seeded player. Ferreira defeated William Michael in the finale with his trusty King's Indian Attack, recovering from his third-round loss against Fanning to post a 5-1 finish. Sarkisian shared fourth place with Matthews, who defeated Schinzel in the final round, and Huntington, who beat Oakley.

Although the tournament started with ten players over 2000, the early rounds proved fatal to the ambitions of most of the Experts: Sarkisian, Neville, and Michael Bienenstock of Newton all suffered first-round draws, while Downing, Matthews, and Ferreira all were upset on adjacent boards in round three. After three rounds Shaw shared the lead only with Michael (1900), Godoy (1867), and Fanning (1861); after Shaw defeated Godoy and Michael downed Fanning in round four, Shaw then beat Michael in round five to take a clear lead. Sarkisian and Neville trailed by a half-point after four, and in round five Sarkisian defeated Neville to earn the right to face Shaw for the title.

Among the lower-rated players, notable performances were Schinzel (1752, 24th-seed) defeating Bienenstock and Godoy back-to-back in rounds four and five, and Oakley's 2.5-0.5 with two half-point byes, which carried him undefeated into the final round. The biggest upset was O'Keeffe's third-round win over Mark Steinberg of Framingham, despite the 410-point differential.

1987 Champion Jack Young of Acton was unable to defend his title due to other commitments, but was on hand during the final round to congratulate his successor. Previous champions had been David Drumm of Framingham (1986), Drew Sarkisian of Oxford and Alejandro Beltran, now of Flushing NY

(co-champions in 1985), and Larry Williams of Worcester (1984). The 1988 Championship attracted a 58-player field, a record for the club championship which also tied the club's previous record weeknight tournament turnout. Warren Pinches directed.