

Legendary Brooklyn high school chess team wins 21st championship

BY JOHN ANNESE

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The chess team at Brooklyn's Edward R. Murrow High School won its 21st city chess championship Sunday. From left: Samantha Dong, Steven Xue, Wang Chan, Justin Dalhouse, Marcus Sutton, Anthony Saquisili and coach Eliot Weiss. (COURTESY ELIOT WEISS)

You come at the king, you best not miss.

The legendary chess team at Brooklyn's Edward R. Murrow High School notched its 21st city chess championship Sunday, winning by just a half-point.

Despite the school's reputation as a chess juggernaut, Eliot Weiss, the school's longtime coach, said the team went in as an underdog this year.

"This time we were. We definitely were," he said.

Murrow edged past Jericho High School in Long Island in the last round of the two-day tournament at the Brooklyn Marriott, which features more than 1,500 students from hundreds of public and private high schools.

"We were playing against master-level chess players," Weiss said. "We have a lot of kids with depth, and they just played over their heads."

The team will travel to Saratoga to compete in the state tournament on March 8.



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"We have a wonderful team of 20 players, all types of ethnicities, genders, nationalities and religions," Weiss said. "It's really like a mini United Nations, and they all come together and they put it together."



"We have a wonderful team of 20 players." From left: Steven Bi, James Lisowski, Anano Kapanadze, Bryce Boyd, Taylor Ngo, Jayvon Bullock, Azizjon Sharifov, Alexandr Li, Azamat Bozorov and Darren Chen. (COURTESY ELIOT WEISS)

Steven Xue, 14, said he faced off against higher-rated players, winning four of his six games over the weekend and coming in 10th place overall.

"I was nervous the whole entire tournament," he said.

He won his final-round game after a bruising showdown with a Fort Hamilton High School student, he said.

"It was a really long and tough game, I slowly took away pawns from her," he said. "I sacrificed my rook for her knight and two pawns."

Sophomore Wang Chen, 15, who competed last year, said he and his teammates faced off against highly skilled competitors.

"We actually just won by half a point in the last round, and we were barely able to pull through," he said. "It feels good, keeping the title."

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