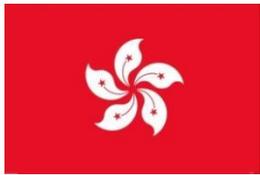




# The Chess Academy presents:



Hong Kong

VS



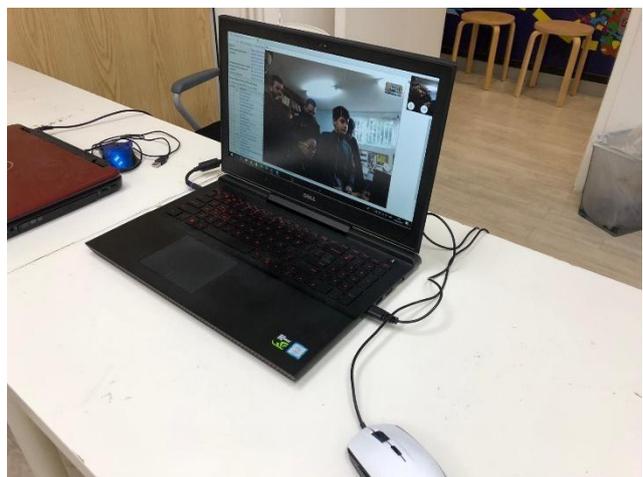
Spain

## Feb 10, 2019

Last Sunday, 10th of February, in one of the numerous events organized by The Chess Academy to help our players practice and improve their chess while having fun. We had the opportunity to play a friendly but competitive match against one of the best teams in Spain, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (USC). Given the time difference the matches were set to start at 5pm Hong Kong time (10am for our opponents).

The players were all very excited and eager to try some of the new strategies they had been studying in their chess lessons. Before the match started both teams spoke for a couple of minutes - introducing themselves and wishing each other good luck.

Everything was set for the match to start. There were 6 players per team and each player played 2 games against the same opponent, one with white pieces and the other one with black. At the end of all the games the team with more points would be declared the winner.



## Match 1:

The Chess Academy 1.5 - 4.5 USC



Board 1: Ben Han 0 - 1 Alejandro Cereijo Suárez. In a very close match Ben tried extremely hard to play for a win by taking big risks during the endgame as the team needed the points. Unfortunately, while in a position that should have been a draw he made a mistake as he was running out of time and lost the game to an unexpected checkmate.

Board 2: Justin Cheng 0 - 1 Manuel Anxo Cabanas López. Justin played an impressive opening and middlegame, and after many twists and turns he found himself up a knight in the endgame. All his opponent had to show for that knight was a passed pawn, but he made good use of it. Using a spectacular queen sacrifice Anxo managed to promote the pawn, and forced Justin to lose a whole rook in the exchange. After that there was not much to be done and the TCA team suffered its 2nd defeat.

Board 3: Roderick Chang 0.5 - 0.5 Nerea Cereijo Suárez. This was a very balanced game where both players were required to use all their ability in order to react to their opponent's ideas. After wild exchanges the game was almost decided by a "mouse-slip" when Nerea made the wrong move when she was trying to recapture a bishop. Roderick, showing great sportsmanship, acknowledged that the game was a draw and it wouldn't have been fair to win the point by taking advantage of her involuntary mistake and offered a draw. These are the values that we encourage all the players to learn through our sport.

Board 4: Ritvik Gupta 0.5 - 0.5 Eduardo Cabanas López. This was the final game to finish and it was an extremely competitive one. After a quiet opening, both players missed several opportunities in a middlegame full of tactical possibilities. They reached an endgame where Eduardo was likely ahead but Ritvik kept fighting. When he only had a few seconds left and everything seemed lost Ritvik made a combination that gave him a material advantage. Knowing that there probably wasn't enough time to win the game he offered a draw that his opponent gladly accepted.

Board 5: Samuel Wong 0.5 - 0.5 Antón Quintas Otero. This was a very balanced game between 2 aggressive players. Samuel started the game trying to attack his opponent early, but Antón fought back and managed to bring a very active queen and knight into Samuel's territory forcing him to exchange queens and go into an endgame a couple of pawns down. Samuel then executed what can be called textbook defence and brought his rook to the backrank and 7th rank to create a counterplay. Antón didn't see a clear way to make progress and as the clock was running down they both repeated the position 3 times resulting in a draw.

Board 6: Atiksh Gupta 0 - 1 Lois Quintas Otero. Atiksh, our youngest player being only 6, played against one of the brightest and most talented kids in Spain who was also 6. The game was short but Atiksh fought well and he even made a combination that gave him an extra pawn. Using a surprising tactical resource Lois found a checkmate pattern that gave him the game.

There was a short break after Match 1, players took a rest and got ready to start the revenge match.

## **Match 2:**

The Chess Academy 1.5 - 4.5 USC



Board 1: 0.5-0.5 After a complicated opening following one of the main lines in the King's Indian defence it looked like the Spanish player had the better chance in the endgame. Ben showed great fighting spirit and never gave up despite being a couple of pawns down and eventually created a passed pawn that forced his opponent to give back the material and arrive to an equal endgame that resulted in a draw.

Board 2: 1-0 Justin played a very interesting middle game, sacrificing a knight for 2 pawns in order to break the enemy castle open. However, when running short on time he failed to carry out his attack in the most effective way and allowed his opponent to trade queens and defend.

Board 3: 1-0 Another middle game full of tactics, but unfortunately Roderick soon miscalculated a variation and missed a very strong intermediate move that left him a piece down. From there his opponent gave him no chance and won the game convincingly.

Board 4: 1-0 Ritvik gained a good position from the opening and had a tough choice to make between slowly improving his pieces or to begin taking direct action against the enemy king. He chose the latter, but it was too early for that, and after a couple of inaccurate moves the attack was over and the endgame could not be saved.

Board 5: 0-1 Samuel played the ultra aggressive Budapest gambit and soon found himself in a comfortable attacking position. With great accuracy he created weaknesses on the enemy castle and placed 3 pieces deep in the opponent's field. That proved to be too much for the Spanish player and he missed a beautiful checkmate pattern that Samuel executed flawlessly.

Board 6: 1-0 In a much tighter game, Atiksh stayed in control for a good part of it. However, after a dubious attacking move his opponent found a fantastic resource that gave him a material advantage and the chance to start an attack. As it is well known, defending is far more difficult than attacking and Atiksh couldn't find a way to save his king in an already difficult situation.

Combined 2 matches: Spain (9) - Hong Kong (3)

While Hong Kong fell short on the day, the overall success of the event meant that everyone could go home happy knowing that they learnt some valuable lessons and got to play some fun and exciting chess matches against tough competition. The Chess Academy will have plenty more chess events for Hong Kong players in the near future.

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