



2008 MINNESOTA COACH OF THE YEAR School Chess Association Names Daa Mahowald

Daa Mahowald has been named 2008 Minnesota Coach of the Year by the School Chess Association. She was awarded this honor on April 12th, during the Opening Ceremonies of the SCA's 39th annual Minnesota Elementary State Chess Championship Tournament, a two-day tournament with over 500 competitors in grades K-6.

When the SCA's Chief Executive Officer, Lorene Lampert, presented the award, she said, "While we have many fine coaches in Minnesota, one coach stood out because she not only fits the criteria but is clearly exceptional. The comments we received during the nomination process made it very clear that this coach is supportive, encouraging to players, and sets a positive attitude for players as well as parents. She runs the Northern Region of the Twin Cities Metro Area Junior High Chess League; she coordinates the Chess Programs in the Robbinsdale School District; and she coaches many, many chess clubs."

Mahowald, or Ms. Daa as she's known by kids around the state, has been teaching and coaching chess for over 20 years. She coached in Nebraska, California and Washington before moving to Minnesota in 2000. She is the 3rd highest ranked woman chess player in Minnesota and the 96th highest ranked woman Quick Chess player in the nation. She is a Minnesota State Chess Association Board Member (the SCA and MSCA are unrelated organizations) and has been the Robbinsdale Area Schools' District Chess Coordinator since 2003.

The SCA was founded in 1969 to provide an opportunity for elementary students to play chess against one another in conditions that recognize the needs of young players. It considers chess coaches to be the people who make this game the joy it can be for those young players. Each year, nominations are solicited from players, parents, and coaches from around Minnesota.

The qualities sought in the Coach of the Year include someone who:

- encourages participation in chess tournaments
- shows enthusiasm for all players – whether advanced or beginner
- does not focus as much on winning as on learning
- helps the youngsters gain a life-long love of the game
- spends time with the players
- helps students with good sportspeoplehip and other goals at tournaments
- is reassuring and supportive, not critical
- always offers hope and encouragement

In addition, the Coach of the Year looks for ways not just to improve the chess of chess club members but looks for ways to improve chess and chess opportunities in the community.

Ms. Daa's Minnesota Chess Clubs

- Cornelia Elementary (Edina) since 2004
- District 281 Summer Chess Club since 2002
- District 273 Summer Chess Club since 2007
- Elm Creek Elementary (Maple Grove) since 2007
- HomeSchoolers @ Golden Valley Library since 2006
- Forest Elementary (Crystal) 2001/2002
- Hayes & Stevenson Elementaries (Fridley) since 2007
- Immaculate Heart of Mary (Minnetonka) since 2006
- Meadowbrook Elementary (Golden Valley) since 2006
- Mothers & Others Chess Club (Golden Valley) since 2004
- New Hope Elementary (New Hope) 2002 through 2004
- UUCM (Wayzata) 2003 through 2005

Ms. Daa's Minnesota Co-Coached Chess Clubs

- Neill Elementary (Crystal) 2005/2006
- Northport Elementary (Brooklyn Center) 2002 through 2006
- Pilgrim Lane Elementary (Plymouth) since 2005
- Plymouth Middle School since 2003
- Sandburg Middle School (Golden Valley) since 2005
- Sonnesyn Elementary (New Hope) 2001 through 2004
- Sunny Hollow Elementary (New Hope) since 2002