

CHECKMATE FOR MILTON TEEN AT HALTON-WIDE CHESS TOURNEY

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In March, Shamoun Ahmad, 13, placed first in a Halton District School Board chess tournament held at McKenzie-Smith Bennett Public School in Acton among 30 Grade 8 students from across Halton.

Ahmad was introduced to the game by his cousin five years ago, when he was eight years old.

"When I first started playing, I didn't really know how to play," Ahmad said. "With chess, practice makes perfect. You need to play a lot to get good at the game."

Ahmad said he plays every day of the school week now against classmates and his Grade 8 teacher, Roshan Canagasaby, at Hawthorne Village Public School in Milton.

Outside of chess, Ahmad said he enjoys playing soccer and card games, but the real draw toward chess was strategy.

"Card games are luck-based," Ahmad said, "and there aren't a lot of board games that are purely strategy."

While 189 students from across Halton Region competed, Ahmad competed with 30 other students in his grade.

On the day of the tournament, 90 chess boards were



Bryan Myers/Metroland

Shamoun Ahmad, a grade 8 student at Hawthorne Public School, started playing five years ago at school and recently brought home a first place prize at a Halton District School Board chess championship at McKenzie-Smith Bennett Public School in Acton.

set up in the school's gymnasium.

Ahmad played five games, clinching four of the games with the checkmate, and ending one game in a stalemate.

"I was surprised," Ahmad said. "I was just going for fun."

Still, Ahmad went into each game with a strategy.

"I try to get a four-move checkmate," Ahmad said. "People who like chess probably know it, but beginners probably don't."

Regardless of skill level, ending the game in four moves isn't likely.

Typically, games last a maximum of 40 minutes but

usually end in 20 or 30 minutes.

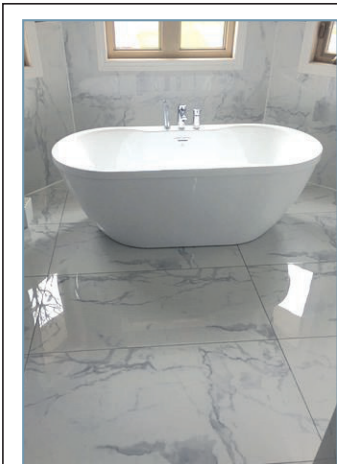
Even though Ahmad brought home a gold medal from the tournament, his parents said chess mastery doesn't run in the family.

"We didn't know he played chess," Aliya Rafay, Ahmad's mother, said. "We don't have a chess board in our house."

Rafay Ahmad, Ahmad's father, said a chess board at home is a distinct possibility.

"Now we know there's a hidden talent there," Rafay said. "It's his hobby, he likes it, he should be doing it more."

Ahmad said he plans to continue competing.



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