

## UConn vs. Simsbury Match Two Scholastic Chess Programs in Action

A number of years ago, I started publishing in the annual NBCC newsletter a major chess story in Connecticut chess that occurred during the year. Last year, my report focused on the growth of scholastic chess in our state and how this has been vital to the future of local and regional chess.

This year, I had the pleasure of being invited to watch a very historic scholastic event in the annals of Connecticut Chess - the third in a series of matches between the University of Connecticut Chess Club and the Simsbury Public Library Chess Club. The match took place in McHugh Hall at UConn on Friday, November 9. Despite the heavy rain and breezy conditions, which caused a slight delay in the match, the inclement weather did not stop the warriors from Simsbury! The school bus from Simsbury was only twenty minutes late.



Before this match, each school had earned a win in their previous matches, so everything was on the table in this crucial match. UConn had the home court advantage this time because the Simsbury young men and women were comprised of elementary, middle school, and high school students. This was unlike a few years ago, when this organization was comprised of primarily high school students. Nevertheless, Simsbury gave it their all, but they resoundingly lost to UConn.

The SPLCC and the UConn CC owe their successes to their coaches, Gert Hilhorst and IM Jan van de Mortel (featured right). Both scholastic chess programs, especially at UConn, have seen tremendous growth and a surge in membership. It is devoted people like Jan and Gert who are making a significant difference in the lives of today's youths. Kudos to these chess stalwarts!

