

Chess success means staying several moves ahead

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE
Staff Writer

EPHRATA — Lillian Jackson is not afraid to say she likes playing chess.

“It requires brain power as well as trying not to freak out,” the Ephrata 11-year-old said.

And that’s important.

“Whenever I freak out, I lose,” she added.

It’s Saturday, and Jackson is standing in the Parkway School gymnasium, holding a page of chess puzzle exercises, having just finished playing a third-round game in the Waypoint Foundation’s Scholastic Chess Tournament.

“The last one is very hard,” she said of the puzzle sheet. Then she looks at her father, Eric, and asks him a question.

See CHESS, A2



Dallin Plaisted, 12, of Ephrata, makes a move in round four of this year’s Waypoint Foundation Chess Tournament.

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CHESS

from A1

"I just stand here," the father said a moment later. "I was telling her I wouldn't help her with

the problem. I told her she had to do it herself," he said.

Like many of the parents present on Saturday, Eric said he helps his daughter practice chess.

"I know the basics," he said.

Lillian, however, is having none of that.

"He beats me every time," she whispers as she smiles.

While he didn't put it this way, not freaking out is one of the rules chess is supposed to teach, according to Roger Pugh, one of the founders and organizers of the Waypoint Foundation's annual Ephrata chess tournament.

Pugh and his brother Troy first organized the chess tournament around 15 years ago to honor their other brother Ryan, a three-time high school chess champion who died in a car accident in 2001.

"We believe that if a kid can learn the game of chess, they can go through thinking ahead," he said.

Mostly, that means not getting caught up in the moment and appreciating that sometimes sacrifices need to be made in the here-and-now in order to set yourself up for a possible better position in the future.

In other words — don't freak out.

"So, we love the game



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Trung Tran, of Moses Lake, reviews chess problems with his son Joshua, 12, and daughter Gianna, 9, at the Waypoint Foundation's annual chess tournament in Ephrata on Saturday.

of chess because it teaches that and it's quite fun," he said.

Around 60 kids from all over Grant County were in Ephrata on Saturday to test their skills and see if they could remain undefeated.

"It's fun," said Dallin Plaisted, 12, of Ephrata. "It's taught me to always be 10 moves ahead."

Plaisted, who recently had to have surgery for a brain aneurysm, said he'd managed to win two of the three games he'd played by late morning.

"Dallin's a perfect example of thinking ahead, of not being stuck in the mire of today," Pugh added.

Ken and Christie McLain of Moses Lake have been long-

time attendees at the Waypoint Tournament. All six of their sons have played chess, and their oldest won the tournament some years ago. Their two youngest sons, Ben and Andrew, played in Saturday's tournament.

"Most of the kids enjoy it, some really enjoy it," he said. "Ben loves it; thinks of it as a battle, a war, an opponent he's going to destroy. He's very competitive."

McLain said he learned chess from his father, but added he's not all that good at it. Not like his sons.

"Ben takes chess very seriously," he added. "Like I would think of basketball."