

Wu team wins Youth Swiss



ACBL Educational Foundation President Robert Todd, right, present trophies to the winners of the National Youth Swiss Teams: Tiger Li, Samuel Li, Han Wu and Darwin Skalski.

The team of Han Wu, Samuel Li, Tiger Li and Darwin Skalski won the ACBL Educational Foundation and BridgeWhiz National Youth Swiss Teams on Saturday.

Wu and Samuel Li are from the Toronto area; Skalski and Tiger Li are from Buffalo NY.

The team started out getting blitzed in the first round and finished in fifth place out of 10 qualifiers, 17 victory points behind the leaders with about half as much carryover. They never met that team in the final session, but they got big enough wins in three of their matches to win by 4.28 VPs with a score of 65.38.

In second place were Matt Rippin of Plano TX, Nicole Qian of Gainesville FL, Garrett Liu of Oakville ON and Quan Chen of North York ON. Both the first- and second-place teams lost their matches to the third-place team of Kayden Ge and Brian Zhang of the Silicon Valley area and Charlie Chen and Andrew Chen of Austin TX.

The Canadian half of the winning team were members of Canada's Under-16 team for 2020 when the event was canceled. They became partners shortly after attending their first Youth NABC in 2016 in Washington DC. Wu started that year as a fifth grader, while Li started the year before. They went to transnationals in Italy last summer and travel frequently for tournaments. Wu started a bridge club at St. Brother Andre Catholic High School in Markham ON. They won the Friday morning Youth Pairs.

That was why Tiger Li asked them if they had a team for Saturday and arranged the matchup.

The Buffalo pair has been playing about as long, though together only the past three years. They both started playing at the Buffalo Bridge Center – Li in 2015,

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Jin wins Sportsmanship Award

Andrew Jin, 16, of Newtown PA won the Master Point Press Sportsmanship Award.

Jin came to the Youth NABC as a volunteer. Last year in Providence he took the Best Practices Teacher Workshop the weekend before the Youth NABC, and got to know Stephanie Threlkeld, the ACBL manager of marketing and education who oversees the Youth NABC. He's been teaching in the Philadelphia area and had some success recruiting young players. When the King of Prussia Regional held a youth game earlier this month, over 30 kids showed up.

"I thought, how else can I support bridge?" Jin said.

So he offered to help Threlkeld and Shaneka Cunningham as a volunteer for this tournament. The day before the youth events started, he folded T-shirts, sorted trophies and stuffed gift bags. Then the next day he helped with registration and giving directions.

He hadn't made plans to play but was available as a fill-in. They needed him in the cardroom pairs in

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Master Point Press Sportsmanship Award



Andrew Jin

Educational Foundation National Youth Swiss Teams



ACBL Educational Foundation President Robert Todd, right, present trophies to the winners of the National Youth Swiss Teams: Tiger Li, Samuel Li, Han Wu and Darwin Skalski.

Baron Barclay National Youth Pairs



Jim Maier of Baron Barclay, center, presents trophies to Garrett Liu and Quan Chen.

Second in the National Youth Swiss Teams: Quan Chen, Garrett Liu, Nicole Qian and Matt Rippin



Second: Edward He and Eric He



First in B and C: Alexandra Deschenes, Lydia Zhang and (not pictured) Avery Liang and Maiya Clouse

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ACBL ED FOUNDATION & BRIDGE WHIZ NATIONAL YOUTH OPEN SWISS TEAMS

10 Tables / Based on 18 Tables

	A	B	C		
7.62	1			Han Wu, Markham ON; Samuel Li, North York ON; Tiger Li, Buffalo NY; Darwin Skalski, Williamsville NY	65.38
5.72	2			Matthew Rippin, Plano TX; Nicole Qian, Gainesville FL; Garrett Liu, Oakville ON; Quan Chen, North York ON	61.10
4.29	3			Kayden Ge, Cupertino CA; Charlie Chen – Andrew Chen, Austin TX; Brian Zhang, Dublin CA	60.07
3.21	4			Jack Boge, New York NY; Avery Silverstein, Ridgefield CT; Nathan Gong – Arthur Gong, Sammamish WA	58.40
2.54	5			Eric He – Edward He – Jason Yao, Bellevue WA; Ella Su, Redmond WA	48.69
2.15		1	1	Avery Liang – Alexandra Deschenes, Bellevue WA; Lydia Zhang, Clyde Hill WA; Maiya Clouse, Kirkland WA	35.00
1.61		2		Adam Hemmer, Houghton MI; Zinnia Meyer, Chicago IL; Renata Serrano, Belleville NJ; Lee Blocher, Champaign IL	32.68
1.21		3	2	Jerry Shang, South Plainfield NJ; Autumn Tarver, Orange NJ; James Fu, Westfield NJ; James Sung, New York NY	23.34
0.91		4		Alex Fu, Westfield NJ; Alexander Xu, Lisle IL; Davis Buff, New Hill NC; Olivia Rabinowitz, Williamsburg VA	17.03

SATURDAY AFTERNOON YOUTH PAIRS

4.0 Tables		A	B	C		
2.43	1				Michael Hu, Plainsboro NJ; Jerry Yao, Millstone NJ	58.73%
1.82	2		1		Andrew Jin, Newtown PA; Oliver Que, Princeton NJ	55.56%
1.20	3/4				Martha Johnson – Tamyra Rumble, Orange NJ	52.38%
1.20	3/4		2		Melanie Skalski, Williamsville NY; Carol Li, Buffalo NY	52.38%

SATURDAY MORNING CARDROOK PAIRS

3.0 Tables		A	B	C		
1.06	1		1		Frances Richardson, Amery WI; Avalon Bribitzer-Stull, Bloomington MN	66.79%
0.70	2/3		2/3		Kyra Smartt – Asani Sanford-Green, Orange NJ	50.00%
0.70	2/3		2/3		Kayla Carter – Ivan Gabriel, Orange NJ	50.00%

SATURDAY AFTERNOON CARDROOK PAIRS

4.0 Tables		A	B	C		
1.14	1		1		Ounar Traore – Samuel Clement, Orange NJ	74.53%
0.86	2				Nolan Balocki, San Francisco CA; Clayton Kaneko, Danville CA	71.75%
0.79	3		2		Emma Wang, Palatine IL; Kaining Sheng, Northbrook IL	45.83%

Consolation Youth Pairs

Winners of the Saturday Afternoon Youth Pairs: Michael Hu and Jerry Yao



First in B: Andrew Jin and Oliver Que



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Other interests

During lunch at the Youth NABC on Saturday, we asked players: What is an activity other than bridge that you really enjoy? Here are their answers.



“Uno or moving around. I like that I can have fun while doing some exercise.”

*Olivia Sekani, 9
Orange NJ*



“I really like to read. I feel like it’s really interesting that you can get lost in it.”

*Clayton Kaneko, 10
Danville CA*



“Chess. It’s pretty simple to learn. But you need to devote a lot of time to be good at it.”

*Adam Hemmer, 12
Houghton MI*



“I really like playing the oboe. I like hearing music. It makes it better that I get to play it.”

*Frances Richardson, 13
Amery WI*



“Basketball. I’m always scoring points. I’m good at defense.”

*Oumar Traore, 11
Orange NJ*



“I like drawing. It’s like therapeutic.”

*Melanie Skalski, 14
Buffalo NY*



“Tennis. Strategy, exercise, fun.”

*Nathan Gong, 16
Sammamish WA*



“Basketball. I’m pretty fast, I can handle the ball.”

*Samuel Clement, 11
Orange NJ*



“I’m on the swimming team. The meets are fun. You can hang out with friends when not racing. It’s good to see how you compare to other people.”

*Alex Fu, 14
Westfield NJ*



“I’m a theater kid. There’s so many different things I can do. I act, I’m going to be stage manager, I also work on the business side.”

*Olivia Rabinowitz, 17
Williamsburg VA*



“I really enjoy doing team activities. Synchronized swimming, I’m also on math team. I like the feeling of working together to achieve something greater than what we could do on our own.”

*Nicole Qian, 17
Gainesville FL*



“I’m a tennis star – just like Serena actually. I play clarinet, alto sax, I’m teaching myself piano. It’s nice to come together as a group and play.”

*Tamyra Rumble, 18
Orange NJ*

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“I like playing video games. My favorite is Sonic Frontiers. I like how it’s an open world, you can go around at your own pace.”

*Leon Gabriel, 11
Orange NJ*



“I like hanging out with my friends. We just bike around our neighborhood. I like that it gets me out of the house.”

*Carol Li, 14
Buffalo NY*



“I play softball. It’s relaxing not in the usual way but in the sense that you forget about everything else.”

*Autumn Tarver, 17
Orange NJ*



“I play badminton on a school team. Like bridge, you have a partner. It’s getting better and competing.”

*Garrett Liu, 17
Oakville ON*



“Golf. The excitement when you swing good. You can always work toward something because you’ll never be perfect.”

*Davis Buff, 15
Raleigh NC*



“I do speech and debate. I like that I get to write my own speeches about topics I’m interested in and share them.”

*Matt Rippin, 18
Plano TX*



“I play baseball. There’s times when it’s relaxing and fun, you can hang out with your friends, and there’s time when it’s really focused.”

*Nolan Balocki, 14
San Francisco CA*



“I play go. It’s a game that originated in Asia. It makes me feel Chinese. It’s really competing, you can go to war with someone.”

*Jerry Shang, 18
South Plainfield NJ*



“I’m a cellist. I especially enjoy the theory, seeing the puzzle pieces coming together.”

*Quan Chen, 17
North York ON*



“I like watching sports, playing games, reading manga and learning in general.”

*Jeremiah Charles, 17
Orange NJ*



“Chess. It’s like bridge, it’s a mindsport – lots of thinking. It’s fun.”

*Everett Erpelding, 9
Minnetonka MN*



“Sleeping. I don’t think when I’m doing it. Sometimes you get to dream.”

*Renata Serrano, 19
Belleville NJ*

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Cardrook Pairs



Winners of the Morning Cardrook Pairs: Avalon Britzber-Stull, Frances Richardson and Emma Wang. Wang had the top score playing with an ineligible volunteer, so the second-highest scoring pair was declared the winners.



Winners of the Afternoon Cardrook Pairs: Oumar Traore and Samuel Clement



Second: Nolan Balocki and Clayton Kaneko

Youth Swiss

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Skalski in 2016 – through a school program. “They offered a lesson to the nerdy, gifted math students,” Skalski said, and invited them to the club.

“I was a bad player before COVID,” Skalksi said. “When I say bad, I mean I had to check my notes to know it was right before raising 1♥ to 2♥. But once COVID hit, there was a spark.”

“I was that spark,” Li said. Li saw his potential and asked him to be partners. They began playing a lot online and worked on improving their game. “When this guy puts his mind to something, it’s insane.”

Li had played in cardrook pairs at the Youth NABC in 2019, but Skalski’s first time was last year in Providence. They planned to go the Junior U.S. Bridge Championships last December in Atlanta, but they got snowed in due to a major blizzard in Buffalo.

The team receives \$4000 in scholarships from the Ed Foundation.

Sportsmanship Award

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the morning and in the Swiss teams in the afternoon when someone got sick. He finally got to play with his regular partner today.

“I truly enjoy talking to people and understanding how they started with bridge,” Jin said. “I tried to be as nice as possible.”

The sportsmanship award is a \$1000 scholarship from Master Point Press.

“It still feels like a dream,” Jin said. “I didn’t expect this.”

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