

2021 Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame of Inductee:

Roger Rudolph

Born on a farm near Little Falls, MN, Roger attended a one-room school house and was not introduced to the rules of chess until age 13. While this may seem a bit later than the trajectory of today's stars, Roger quickly made up for lost ground. Under the tutelage of University of Minnesota Professor Paul Kirchner, he discovered the works of Aaron Nimzowitsch and soon launched himself into the world of competitive chess.

Playing in his first sectional tournament, Roger took first place, earning a class A rating. He then qualified for the 1964 Minnesota State Championship playoff, an achievement to be repeated over and over for a total of 11 times. In 1978, Roger took his first state title, clearing his closest playoff finishers by 1½ points. However, he discounted this victory, pointing out that he did not have to overcome Curt Brasket at the event. When Roger won the State Championship again in 1980, he regarded this as the pinnacle of his career, as this time he had to best Brasket as well.

Although these accomplishments would demonstrate a Hall of Fame career by themselves, Roger was far from being done. While starting late as mentioned above, the longevity of Roger's excellence over the board is another exceptional aspect. Roger won other Minnesota "major" events, including his co-champion finish at the 1998 Minnesota Open, thus earning his final spot in the playoffs. This 34-year span of playoff qualifications has only been surpassed to date by Minnesota legends Curt Brasket and Tim Radermacher. Roger has also twice captured the Minnesota Senior Champion title.

Throughout Roger's chess career, his play has exhibited a mix of creativity and playfulness that is hard to quantify, but easy to appreciate upon exposure. I, along with many others, were always pleased to find ourselves paired with Roger, as we knew, win or lose, there would be some fun to be had. This is especially evident in his annotations of such games, which would inevitably be good for a few laughs. It is thus perhaps not surprising that, as much as Roger loved the game itself, he loved the social aspect of it even more. Besides the many friends he made through playing chess, Roger also became a member of Chess Collectors International, attending their conventions around the world. And finally, Roger's love of team chess resulted in his participation in the Twin Cities Chess League for many decades. The number of times that Roger led such teams to first place finishes in the top division are too numerous to recall.

The excellence, the longevity, and the joy that Roger Rudolph has brought to Minnesota chess makes him a prime candidate for induction into the 2021 Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame.

The Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame is honored to welcome Roger Rudolph.