

SANDEEP REPEATS AS JR CHESS CHAMP

★ **SANDEEP** Gali won his second consecutive Bahamas Junior Chess Championship title in one of the most hotly-contested tournaments in recent memory.

Over the four-round event, Gali finished undefeated, with his only setback being a draw against rival *Philip Hanna Jr* to put him on 3.5 points. In their pivotal round-three match, Hanna was poised to topple Gali from his throne.

But he was unable to close out the game before time expired. The contest was declared a draw based on Gali's insufficient material.

The other big storyline of the day was the stellar performance of young *Nathan Smith*. A newcomer to chess with only a handful of tournaments under his belt, Smith cruised through the first three rounds to

take the lead going into the final round. There, he was no match for the battle-tested Gali and had to settle for a well-deserved second-place finish.

The tournament was sponsored by the *MedNet Group of Companies*, an avid supporter of the Bahamas Chess Federation and its junior program.

Fourteen players, ranging in age from five to 17, participated in the event.

Based on their performances within their respective age groups, six were named to the national junior chess team that will compete at the upcoming *CAC Youth Festival*, scheduled for *December* in *Costa Rica*.

The six on the team are *Nathan Smith (Under 8)*; *Diajah Johnson (Under 10)*; *Malik Sands (Under 12)*; *Sandeep Gali (Under 14)*; *Nelissa Thomas (Under 16)* and *Kieran Diggiss (Under 18)*.



● **LINE-UP:** The Chess players with Dr Charles Diggiss (left) and national arbiter Elton Joseph (third from right)



● **DYNAMIC DIAJAH:** Dr Charles Diggiss with Under-10 winner Diajah Johnson



● **KING KIERAN:** Dr Diggiss presents trophy to Under-18 winner Kieran Diggiss



● **HE'S A CHAMP:** Dr Diggiss with Under-14 winner & Junior Champ Sandeep Gali



● **TERRIFIC THOMAS:** Dr Diggiss presents trophy to Under-16 winner Nelissa Thomas



● **SUPER SMITH:** Under-8 winner and 2nd-place overall winner, Nathan Smith



● **MIGHTY MALIK:** Under-12 winner Malik Sands & Dr Charles Diggiss



● **FOCUSSED:** Champ Sandeep Gali (left) battles Philip Hanna Jr (right)



● **JOINT THIRD:** Third-place overall winners, Henderson Cartwright (centre) and Kieran Diggiss (right)