ANDREW MCEACHERN, amceachern6@gmail.com

Tournaments in a Proofs Class

What possible place does a tournament have in the middle of an introductory proofs class? I've known many instructors, including myself, who have included the odd riddle or math problem that is seemingly unrelated to the material currently being studied. Working on the same kinds of problems leads to a certain kind of fatigue with which we are all familiar, and I believe the injection of a different kind of problem into the standard curriculum gives the brains of our students a chance to shift gears. A game can be thought of as specific kind of riddle, and putting a prize at the end engages even the students who are not normally competitive. It sparks their logic, creativity, and clear strategic thinking, which are essential ingredients in the construction of proofs. In this talk, I'll describe my version of the Colonel Blotto Tournament, how my class responded, and then we'll play a round of the tournament together.