

Trans-Atlantic Suspense Ends in Win for Chess Team

UT Dallas Claims Cup for Third Year in a Row Against University of Belgrade

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After a nail-biter finish that kept both teams glued to their computer monitors, the UT Dallas chess team claimed victory Friday for the third straight year in the Trans-Atlantic Cup match against the University of Belgrade.

The annual Internet game had played to a tie with only one pair of opponents still battling it out. Freshman Tyler Hughes finally dispatched his foe to tip the score in UT Dallas' favor.

The final score was 8.5-7.5.

The heart-racing finish was made all the more stressful by the fact that the [Internet Chess Club](#) Web site, which had hosted the match online, had mistakenly showed Hughes as playing with the white pieces. That confused some fans - including UT Dallas chess program director Jim Stallings, who checked on Hughes' progress toward the end and mistakenly thought his team was about to lose.

"I told (assistant chess program director) Luis Salinas, 'There is always next year.' He quickly replied, 'ICC has the names posted incorrectly. Tyler is black,'" Stallings said.

"Sure enough, Belgrade was soon congratulating us on winning again, and Hughes was holding the Trans-Atlantic Cup high in the air."

UT Dallas pulled off the win without two of the team's grandmasters. Alejandro Ramirez and Amon Simutowe were barred from playing under match rules because they are now graduate students. Instead, the two spent the match providing game commentary in the VIP viewing room at McDermott Library.

Stallings said Chess Coach Rade Milovanovic did a superb job of coaching the team to victory.

The annual match pits 16 top members from the UT Dallas team against competitors from the University of Belgrade in Serbia. The teams huddle in auditoriums seven time zones apart and play via Internet. Video feeds projected on large screens give both universities a view of the cross-ocean action.

The UT Dallas cheerleaders and Temoc took part in the opening ceremony. Giving opening speeches and making ceremonial first moves on Boards 1, 3, and 5 were State Rep. Jerry Madden, Richardson Mayor Gary Slagel, and Dr. Lawrence Redlinger, UT Dallas' executive director of strategic planning and analysis.

In Belgrade two legends of the game gave speeches and made first moves: Svetozar Gligorich and Ljubomir Ljubojevic.

The UT Dallas chess team got a special video salute from Belgrade from former team member Drasko Boskovic. Boskovic graduated from UT Dallas in December 2008.



UT Dallas chess team members played their opponents on 16 laptop PCs arranged on the stage at Davidson Auditorium.



Projection screens behind the UT Dallas players offered a glimpse of the action seven time zones away in Belgrade, Serbia.



The chess team received a video greeting from an old friend, former teammate Drasko Boskovic, who followed the tournament in Belgrade.

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