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News Release

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UTD To Hold 4th International Chess Tourney at Civic Center and First Bank of Canyon Creek in Richardson

Only American University Ever to Sponsor Such a High-Level Competition

RICHARDSON, Texas (Nov. 17, 2005) – As it has for three of the past four years, The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) next month will host a rare international chess tournament rated by the world governing body of chess, FIDE (*Federation Internationale des Echecs*), and the competition, called the UTD Grandmaster Invitational, is expected to be among the strongest held in the United States this year.

However, in an effort to reach out to the local community and promote greater interest in UTD's Chess Program, tournament organizers have decided to hold this year's UTD Grandmaster Invitational at the Richardson Civic Center, 411 W. Arapaho Road, and the First Bank of Canyon Creek, 429 Belle Grove, instead of on the university campus, where the previous events were held. The competition will run from Dec. 6 to Dec. 14.

Four grandmasters, including the co-winner of last year's tournament, Igor Novikov, 43, of the Ukraine (chess rating of 2580), will participate in the event, said Dr. Tim Redman, professor of literary studies in the university's School of Arts & Humanities and founder and director of the UTD Chess Program. The three others are Alexander M. Goldin, 40, who was born in Russia but now lives in New York (2600); Varuzhan Akobian, 22, formerly of Armenia and Mongolia, now living in the U.S. (2600); and Magesh Chandran Panchanathan, 22, of India, a senior at UTD majoring in computer science (2496).

A brief opening ceremony will be held at the civic center at 5 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 6. Among the dignitaries scheduled to attend are Richardson Mayor Gary Slagel, UTD President David E. Daniel and First Bank of Canyon Creek President Don Reavis. Play will begin at 5:30 p.m.

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During the half-hour opening ceremony, John Jacobs, senior vice president for economic development for the Richardson Chamber of Commerce, will take on Panchanathan in two games of "speed chess," also known as "blitz chess," a variation of chess during which moves are made in awesomely rapid sequence. Jacobs is widely respected throughout the Metroplex for his business acumen, but most people do not know that he is a rated FIDE master and was Texas state chess champion five times. Jacobs played "first board" on the University of Texas at Austin chess team from 1969 to 1973 and currently is president of the Dallas Area Chess In Schools Foundation. Panchanathan earned the title of grandmaster this year and was the star of UTD's victory in the Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Championship last December, when he shocked the chess world by upsetting the top-ranked player in the United States, 29-year-old Grandmaster Alexander "Alex the Invincible" Onischuk of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Although UTD has had four grandmasters on its chess team during the team's 10-year existence, Panchanathan is the only UTD player ever to earn the grandmaster rating while a student at the university.

UTD chess program officials say they hope to make a speed chess match part of the annual tournament festivities and to name the award that goes to the winner the Richardson Cup.

All of the other players entered in the 2005 UTD Grandmaster Invitational are students at the university. Six are international masters, the level just below grandmaster. The international masters are Dmitry Schneider, 21, of New York, a senior majoring in finance (2490); Amon Simutowe, 22, of Zambia, a junior majoring in economics and finance (2458); Marko Zivanic, 21, of Serbia Montenegro, a sophomore majoring in computer science (2454); Drasko Boskovic, 23, of Serbia Montenegro, a sophomore majoring in business administration (2433); Peter M. Vavrak, 23, of Slovakia, a senior majoring in psychology (2387); and Davorin Kuljasevic, 19, of Croatia, a freshman majoring in business administration (2381). FIDE Master John D. Bartholomew, 19, of the U.S., a freshman majoring in business administration (2407), and Michal Kujovic, 24, of Slovakia, a senior majoring in statistics (2346), also will play.

Goldin and Akobian, with the highest rating, are the top seeds in the tournament, followed by Novikov. Former UTD Chess Team Captain Yuri Shulman, 30, won two of the previous FIDE-sanctioned international tournaments held at UTD outright, in 2001 and 2002 (those competitions were limited to coaches and players from the UTD team), and he tied Novikov for first place in last year's higher-level invitational event. However, Grandmaster Shulman who is originally from Belarus and now lives in New York, has another commitment and will be unable to participate in this year's UTD event.

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Each of the 12 players will face each of the others once in the round-robin competition, and the international masters will be able to earn "norms" toward elevation to grandmaster status if they perform exceptionally well in the tournament. Redman, a two-time past president of the U. S. Chess Federation, said that amassing the eight points required to earn a norm would be "extremely difficult," and he predicted that Marko Zivanic would have the best chance of achieving that.

Redman will serve as FIDE arbiter for the tournament along with Luis Salinas, assistant director of the UTD Chess Program and president of the Dallas Chess Club. The competition is free and open to the public, but seating will be limited.

"This will be one of the strongest chess tournaments held in the United States this year, and we are delighted once again to host such a major international event at UTD," Redman said. "As it has in the past, the competition will provide excellent training for the members of our 'A' team as they prepare to defend their Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Championship during the last week of December."

UTD has won or tied for first in the Pan Am tournament four of the past five years.

UTD has a second grandmaster on its chess team this year in addition to Panchanathan. He is 17-year-old Alejandro Ramirez of Costa Rica, who is majoring in physics. Ramirez, one of the youngest grandmasters in the world and the only grandmaster ever from Central America, was one of 17 young men and women selected last winter for this year's class of prestigious Eugene McDermott Scholars at UTD. He will be unable to play in the UTD tournament next month, because he will be with his McDermott Scholar cohorts on a leadership-development trip to Mexico City and Guanajuato. Among other things, the trip will include a briefing for the scholars at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and meetings with Mexican mayors and the governor of the State of Guanajuato.

Ramirez, however, is expected to play in the Pan Am in Miami later next month.

The dates, times and locations of the rounds of the UTD Grandmaster Invitational are as follows:

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- Round 1 – Tuesday, Dec. 6, Richardson Civic Center, 5:30-11 p.m. (opening ceremony at 5 p.m.)
- Round 2 – Wednesday, Dec. 7, Richardson Civic Center, 3-8:15 p.m.
- Round 3 – Thursday, Dec. 8, Richardson Civic Center, 3-8:15 p.m.
- Round 4 – Friday, Dec. 9, Richardson Civic Center, 3-8:15 p.m.
- Round 5 – Saturday, Dec. 10, Richardson Civic Center, 1-6:15 p.m.
- Round 6 – Saturday, Dec. 10, Richardson Civic Center, 6:45 p.m.-12:15 a.m.
- Round 7 – Sunday, Dec. 11, First Bank of Canyon Creek Community Room, 1-6:15 p.m.
- Round 8 – Sunday, Dec. 11, First Bank of Canyon Creek Community Room 6:45-midnight.
- Round 9 – Monday, Dec. 12, First Bank of Canyon Creek Community Room, 3–8:15 pm
- Round 10 – Tuesday, Dec. 13, First Bank of Canyon Creek Community Room 3-8:15 p.m.
- Round 11 – Wednesday, Dec. 14, First Bank of Canyon Creek Community Room, 3-8:15 p.m.

For additional information about the tournament, please contact Luis Salinas at 972-883-2898 or las018400@utdallas.edu.

About UTD

The University of Texas at Dallas, located at the convergence of Richardson, Plano and Dallas in the heart of the complex of major multinational technology corporations known as the Telecom Corridor, enrolls nearly 14,500 students. The school's freshman class traditionally stands at the forefront of Texas state universities in terms of average SAT scores. The university offers a broad assortment of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs. For additional information about UTD, please visit the university's web site at www.utdallas.edu.

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