Chess Team Battles Tough Competition at Meet

*UT Dallas Invitational Makes for Stiff Challenge Before Pan-Am Tournament*

Dec. 1, 2009

The chess team grappled with tough competition at the UT Dallas Invitational Tournament last week but scored a couple of solid gains in the push to move players higher in the World Chess Federation rankings.

Tautvydas Vedrickas, a junior studying political science, finished first in the tournament’s International Master category and achieved the FM (FIDE Master) title in the process.

Bayaraa Zorigt, a senior in business administration, made her first norm to move up from WFM (Woman FIDE master) to WIM (Woman International Master).

The going was tougher in the Grandmaster category, where UT Dallas players got valuable experience before the upcoming Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Championship but failed to achieve grandmaster norms. Finishing on top were visiting grandmasters Giorgi Kacheishvili and Zviad Izoria, both from the Republic of Georgia.

“GMs Kacheishvili and Izoria in the GM section were the top seeds and finished tied for first,” said Jim Stallings, director of the UT Dallas chess program.

To become a titled player, such as a Grandmaster or International Master, a competitor needs to achieve three norms, which are strict tournament criteria that a player must meet to advance in the ranking system.

Four grandmasters were invited to the tournament: Izoria, Kacheishvili; Babakuli Annakov of Texas; and Ildar Ibragimov of Connecticut.

“We expect the hardest competition ever this year at the Pan-Am,” said UT Dallas chess coach Rade Milovanovic. “The other teams have recruited more GMs than ever before to go up against us. I do not think that either UMBC or UTD can expect an easy road to the championship.”

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