

The art of the square deal



Braden Bell, 8, left, plays a practice game against Jason Clomons, 9, as the Fort Worth Christian School chess club prepares for the upcoming tournament. STAR-TELEGRAM/STEWART E. HOUSE

Young players will test their concentration and reasoning skills at Bedford tournament

By **TERRY LEE GOODRICH**
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

BEDFORD — They'll pace. They'll sweat. Some may even weep.

It's not the Olympics or even high school football. It's a regional chess tournament for young competitors expected to attract about 200 players to Bedford on Saturday.

"Chess can be intimidating, and you have to concentrate extremely

hard," said Darrel Knobloch of Euless, a chess teacher and a tournament official. "Some of the older players can't eat breakfast the day of a competition. It's too stressful. Some pace the floor because they're so excited. With some young players, you'll even see their tears on the chessboard because they get so emotional."

Students kindergarten through 12th grade are expected to vie for

trophics at the Texas Chess Association Region II tournament, said Knobloch, youth director of the Watauga Chess Club.

The region, with 33 counties, is one of eight in Texas that hold contests. Winners of the state tournament can get a four-year scholarship to the University of Texas at Dallas, he said.

Chess, which calls for deliber-

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Sydney Black, 9, has a moment of relief after making her move in a game Wednesday at the Fort Worth Christian School library. The school chess club was practicing for the youth tournament Saturday in Bedford.

Chess: Players practice focus, solving problems

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a lot of first-time players even

Alex Chua, 18, of Keller,

who won the state high school

championship in early Febru-

ary, said he got hooked on

chess at age 9.

While chess reduces some

competitors to nail biting,

Chua said he has "nerves of

steel."

"I never panic. I stay calm,"

he said.

Chuo said the game helps

with memory, concentration,

learning from mistakes — and

sportsmanship.

"At the state championship

in Houston, I was pretty excit-

"But my opponent was dis-

appointed, and you don't rub

it in."

Another who sings the

game's praises is Liz Ward,

first game," he said. "We have

can help them get through the

game, but parents and adults

even know how to play the

"A lot of the kids don't

block said

tion through third grades, Kno-

blow said

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STAR-TELORAW/STEWART F. HOUSE

Chess rewards concentration and

far-sighted strategy much more

than snap decisions and simple

guesswork.

faculty adviser of the chess

club at St. Vincent's Cathedral

School in Bedford.

About 40 of the school's

"we work really hard to make

250 students play chess, and

chess accessible to everyone,"

said Ward, who teaches math

and science.

"It's really amazing. Even

kids sit down and put concen-

tration into the game," she

said. "I think chess teaches a

lot of life's lessons. You can

win, lose or draw all in the

same day."

This weekend's event is a

Chess tournament

What: Texas Associa-

tion Region II Tournament for

kindergarten through 12th

grade

When: Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5

p.m. (registration 8 to 8:30

a.m.)

Where: St. Vincent's Cathe-

dral School, 1300 Forest Ridge

Drive, Bedford

Cost to enter: \$22 through 5

p.m. Friday; \$27 day of event.

Contact: (682) 472-8177 or

www.geocities.com/thechess-

matrix/region2.html

no-elimination tournament

Every child will get to play

five rounds, Knobloch said.

Trophies will go to the top

live teams of two to four play-

ers, and to the top 10 individu-

als in each of six age sections.

Medals will be awarded to all

who finish the tournament

with a positive score, and all

competitors will get ribbons.

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