

UTTD chess team triumphs again

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School bests archrival to win 2007 'World Series' of tourneys in Miami

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The University of Texas at Dallas remains king of the chess world.

UTTD won the 2007 Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament on Sunday in Miami. It's the fourth victory in five years for UTTD in what's known as the "World Series of College Chess."

The Richardson school beat its perennial archrival, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, to claim the title. One school or the other has won the tournament every year for the last decade.

Jim Stallings, UTTD's chess director, said the biggest play came in the fifth-round match against UMBC. Freshman Salvijus Berys was ahead but fell deep into thought planning his next move. Suddenly, he had 18 seconds left on the play clock.

"The entire championship was riding on one last play," Mr. Stallings said. "You scored and won the game, or you lost every-

thing."

Mr. Berys made his move — and it turned out to be a good one.

UTTD sent three teams to the tournament. The A team, which includes two chess grandmasters, is the one that finished in first place. The B team tied for second place with teams from UMBC and New York University.

The tournament drew about 150 players from 18 colleges, including UT-Brownsville, Duke, Stanford, Northwestern and the University of West Indies.

To prepare, UTTD players didn't watch films of their opponents, as a football team would. But they did study online databases of their opponents' opening moves in past games.

After the big win, no one doused any coaches with Gatorade. Instead, UTTD chess players feasted at an Argentine steak restaurant in Miami. After four straight days of play, it was a well-deserved meal, Mr. Stallings said.

UTTD has 25 players on its three teams, most of them on chess scholarships. Just three members are from Texas. The rest come from places as diverse as Minnesota, Moldova and Mongolia.

Next up for UTTD, in April: the President's Cup, also known as the "Final Four" of chess.