Chess gives student big check for college

Tournament winner gets UTD scholarship

By Nita Thurman

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

Alone and outnumbered, the White King retreated in the face of a relentless enemy advance.

"Check," 9-year-old Alex Marche announced.

But Ryan Winsburt, 8, wasn't ready to surrender. It took just a few more moves before Alex had him pinned down. Game over.

Alex and Ryan then shook hands—before plunging immediately into another game. They were among the 130 Dallas-area kids—sixth-graders or younger—who registered Saturday for the Chess-in-Schools tournament at Obediah Knight Elementary School near Love Field.

The tournament, in its ninth year, was worth more Saturday than just a trophy. The winner also was awarded a four-year full scholarship to the University of Texas at Dallas.

That prize went to Elaine Weathers, a sixth-grader at Arthur Kramer Elementary School in North Dallas. The award, sponsored in part by Southwest Airlines, was presented by Michael Coleman, UTD's undergraduate dean.

"Obviously, they will have to matriculate from high school and meet UTD entrance exam requirements," said Rodney Thomas, who helped establish the Chess-in-Schools program in Dallas. "But if they can do that, they will have a scholarship waiting for them that will pay tuition and fees."

The chess boards were set up in Knight Elementary's cafeteria. Outside, noisy kids bounced balls off the school walls, shot baskets and clambered over slides and swings. Inside, the competitors filed in and paired off at the assigned places announced by tournament director Luis Salinas.

They sat down, shook hands and stared at the boards. Silence descended.

"It is amazing how quiet they get," Mr. Thomas said. "Outside, they are normal, noisy children. Inside, they tend to get pretty intense."

Mr. Thomas said he was a teenager in New Orleans when he first fell in love with chess. It remains a passion.

The Chess-in-Schools program was imported to Dallas from New York in 1990, he said. Dallas now has its own chapter, which sponsors clubs in schools all over the area.

The idea is to teach life-changing skills, particularly to inner-city students, Mr. Thomas said.

"Chess teaches how to analyze situations," he said. "You have to set goals. You have to make plans and execute plans ... And it is a very egalitarian game. It is open to anyone from all walks of life."

Because it's a game of attack and defense, chess may seem aggressive, Mr. Thomas admitted, but it's not in the same league as video-game warfare.

"It's basically an intellectual challenge," he said. "And a video game is not interactive with a human. You just play a machine."
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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

With the support of UTD President Franklyn Jenifer and Provost Hobson Wildenthal, Undergraduate Dean Dennis Kratz has announced that starting with the academic year beginning September 1996, The University of Texas at Dallas will award at least two chess scholarships annually. Depending on the qualifications of the applicants, the scholarships will cover up to full tuition, room, and expenses.

UTD is located on a spacious campus in the Telecommunications Corridor of Richardson, a northern suburb of Dallas. Especially known for its programs in the Natural Sciences and Computer Science, UTD has the most rigorous entrance standards of any public institution in Texas. With 5,000 undergraduates and 4,000 graduate students, it offers students the advantages of both a research university and a liberal arts college.

The chess program at UTD just started last year. Faculty sponsors are Associate Provost Lawrence Redlinger, and Professors Esteban Egea and Tim Redman. High school students with SAT scores of 1100 or greater and a USCF rating of at least 1700 should write for information to:

Dennis Kratz
Dean of Undergraduate Studies
The University of Texas at Dallas
P.O. Box 830688, Richardson, TX 75083

SHIMER COLLEGE, ILLINOIS

Shimer College is a small, liberal-arts college located in Waukegan, Illinois about 40 miles north of Chicago and 50 miles south of Milwaukee. The college boasts a student-faculty ratio of 8:1; class size ranges from four to twelve students. The curriculum follows a great books plan in humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and integrative studies.

Shimer College offers two chess scholarships. The Paul Murphy Scholarship of up to $2,000 a year is awarded on the basis of academic potential, achievement as a chess player, and financial need. There is no minimum chess requirement. The Master-in-Residence Scholarship is awarded to a chess master who takes primary responsibility for the instructional activities of the Shimer Chess Club.

The Shimer Chess Team has had some noticeable results. Although it does not travel, it competed in the 1991 Pan-American Intercollegiate in Chicago, finishing first overall among schools with enrollment less than 2,000. In 1994 it tied for first in the Midwest Amateur Team Championship.

For information
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the last part of the plan can be unsuccessful, not only because of the White king but also because of the quick march of the c3 pawn.

43. d5 e4 44. Re7 g6

My king is still close enough to keep the d-pawn from becoming too dangerous.

45. Ra7 Rg2f 46. d6 Kf6 47. Kd5 Rxf3

48. Rxa4

We were both aiming at this position. Gurevich, because he saw 48... Rxc4+ Rf4+ Kg5 50. Rc4 Rd3– 51. Rd4 Ra3 (of course pawn endings are losing for Black: 51... Rxd4+? 52. Kxd4 Kf6 53. Ke5 and White wins) 52. d7 Ra8 53. Ke6 h4 (or 53... Rd8 54. Ke7 Rxe4+ 55. Rxe4 h4 56. Ke6 h3 57. Rf7 K-any 58. Kf6 g5 59. Kg7 draws) 54. d8=Q Rxd8 55. Rxd8, and White can’t lose. On the other hand, I was happy with this position because I saw:

48... g5!!

Which stops Rf4+. Finally, I have this game in my pocket and the rest is simple. He has to protect the pawn on c3 to avoid my “simple” plan (see note to move 42.)

49. Re4 b3 50. Re5 Rd3+ 51. Ke4

If 51. Ke6 h4 52. Rd5, then 52... Rxd5 is easiest. (Now Black has a winning rook and pawn ending.)

51... Rxd5 52. Rf5+ Kg6 53. Rxb5 Re6+ 54. Kd5 Re1 55. Rb8 h4 56. Rh8

Kf5 57. c4 Rd1+ 58. Kc6 Kf4 59. c5 Kg3

60. Ra8 h3, White resigns.

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