

Transatlantic trounce



The UTD chess team plays Belgrade for the third year. UTD won with 11 wins, three draws and two losses.

photo by Sonia Rego

Chess team keeps European rivals in check for second year

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After hours of silence, the Davidson Auditorium audience erupted into applause as grandmaster Alejandro Ramirez raised the Trans-Atlantic Cup and smiled from behind the podium. Most of the day's chess matches ended around 3 p.m., but Ramirez finished his game last, locked in a heated match against Belgrade's Milos Pavlovic, an international master.

Arts and technology senior Ramirez took out a pawn with his queen and ended the game victorious.

UTD's chess team successfully defended the Trans-Atlantic Cup against the University of Belgrade Oct. 31 with 11 wins, three draws and two losses.

Belgrade, Europe's top college chess team, took the first Trans-Atlantic Cup in 2006. The 2007 cup went to UTD Chess, 11-5, and the Comets repeated their win Oct. 31 at the third annual competition.

"It is really big time over there," said James Stallings, UTD chess program director. "Our beating them is analogous to Belgrade sending a football team to Austin and defeating the Longhorns."

A miscommunication about Serbia's Oct. 26 daylight savings time shift delayed the match, but after about half an hour the UTD chess team sat stoically in front of their laptops. The chess team's attire fit the Halloween afternoon — orange polos and black jackets.

The game was played online on 16 boards under the time constraint of 40 minutes.

"When you make a move, you're making a statement. There's a lot of psychology to the game," said Ramirez. "Forty

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minutes, considered a rapid time control, is not much of an issue for me, personally."

Outside, in the lobby of the School of Management, a projector displayed individual games and Karina Vazirova, UTD chess first alternate and economics sophomore, discussed strategy and explained the players' moves to a small, dedicated segment of the audience.

There was also a viewing party in the McDermott Library where the audience could and ask questions of Rodney Thomas, president of the UTD Chess Program Advisory Board, and John Jacobs, World Chess Federation master and senior vice president of the Richardson Chamber of Commerce.

On Board 9, finance junior Igor Shneider played a tough match that ended in a draw.

"Shneider is showing an aggressive style, which is unlike him.

He's usually quiet," Thomas said. "Chess shows a person's true personality."

Both universities' representatives exchanged congratulations as the competition ended.

"It was an excellent match for you, but not so much for us!" said Milos Nedeljkovic.

Ramirez, who made the last move of the competition, said he was proud of his team.

"It is always gratifying to represent UTD, especially against such a powerhouse as the University of Belgrade," Ramirez said. "UTD is among the best in the world, and I don't think people realize what it really means."

There's more online at
utdmercury.com

Check out the UTD chess team standings and a YouTube video of Alejandro Ramirez vs. Belgrade's Milo Pavlovic at www.utdmercury.com.