Interview with Alexey Root

Ches Program Associate Director

Dr. Jennifer had mentioned the chess team’s accomplishments in a recent Dallas Morning News article, and he was very proud of the fact that UTD didn’t have a winning football team, but rather a winning Chess Team. Please help us to see the significance of a winning Chess team for UTD? What does it say about us as a university?

Q. The chess team is a symbol of the University of Texas at Dallas. Chess is a competitive, intellectual game. Similarly, UTD graduates are competitive in many intellectual fields.

Share with us your team’s history, and how it became a national champion team?

Q. Dr. Jennifer and Dr. Tom Kedman as faculty advisors. The team gained strength through top players in the country hearing about UTD, and wanting to join our team. We have improved through support from the UTD administration, through the training sessions led by our coach International Master Rafik Milasovic, and because of the dedicated efforts of team members at every competition. The Pan-American Chess Championships (North, South, and Central) Last December determined the best college team in the Americas. The UTD team defeated the number one finishing team in a late match. This year we are hoping to win the prestigious championship.

How can students show their support of your team’s games?

Q. We hope that students will drop by the Chess Club (8:30-10:30) on Fridays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. to enjoy games of chess, learn from the experts, and watch our national champion team compete.
Dallas Chess Team

What is the best way to cover your games?

Chess is very exciting to newspaper readers. I think the Mercury could publish a chess problem from the team every week or two. For example, the L.A. Times does this on the same page as a crossword puzzle. For example, the Mercury could print the next week. Each problem of position could be from a game of a different UTD team member. I suggest working with Ken Elliott, keelliott@utdallas.edu, on selecting team members to provide the chess problems for the Mercury.

Recently, one of your team members passed away at a very young age. In memory of his contribution to the team, would you like to share with us aspects of his participation in your team’s success?

Steven Grubbs died September 1, 2000 from a seizure that apparently overcame the anti-seizure medication he had been taking since age five. Steven was a very important part of our team’s success. First, he was a great chess player and chess teacher. He really loved tactical positions, those types of chess games in which one must calculate exactly and then sacrifice material in an attempt to win. Second, Steven was a sportsman. Like most elementary school chess players, he was very interested in sports, chess depends on good play among players. Steven’s behavior generated goodwill among his team members and our chess opponents.

Tell us something about your team members and how each person aids to your team’s success.

Many UTD Chess Program members attended Steven’s funeral on September 3. Steven’s parents chose to bury him in his UTD team shirt. His mother told me that the shirt meant a great deal to him. All of us in the Chess Program miss him very much. I hope that Steven’s behavior, always polite and generous, inspires our Chess Program members to be the same.

I think the best source for all your members and how each person aids to your team’s success is the biographies on the webpage...