

## Can Anyone Take Down UTD?



By IM John Bartholomew  
February 25, 2008

*Dallas, Texas is rapidly becoming U.S. chess central with a dedicated scholastic community, a USCL championship for the Dallas Destiny, and now a UTD repeat in the Pan Am Intercollegiate.*

For the second time in three years tropical Miami, Florida played host to the Pan-American Intercollegiate Championship from December 27-30. Twenty-eight teams from Canada, the Caribbean, and the United States competed in the annual tournament traditionally billed as the "World Series of College Chess." After six rounds of tense play, the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) matched their 2006 result by taking clear first with a 5½/6 score. Critical to UTD's success was a round five victory over their chief rival, the University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC).

The first couple rounds saw only one major upset as lowly rated Johns Hopkins University (1646 average) knocked off perennially-strong University of Toronto-A (2272). Top seeds UTD-A (2535 average), UMBC-A (2494), UTD-B (2446), and the University of Texas at Brownsville-A (UTB-A)(2349) all coasted to 2-0 starts.

The action began to heat up in round three when UTB-A, headed by GM Axel Bachmann and IM Dan Fernandez took on UTD-A while UMBC-A faced a tough Miami Dade College-A team with GM-elect Renier Gonzalez on first board. Still, the stacked lineups of the top two seeds proved too difficult to overcome as UTD-A and UMBC-A moved to 3-0. Joining them were UTD-B and Stanford University (2223), who had just defeated the faltering University of Toronto-A team.

Round four unfolded with the expected matchup of UMBC-A and UTD-B. Part of UTD's pre-tournament strategy was to create two strong, competitive squads that both had reasonable chances to contend for first place. This worked to perfection at the 2006 Pan-Ams when both the "A" and "B" squads defeated UMBC-A in succession. Unfortunately for UTD, history did not repeat itself and UMBC-A won handily with a score of 3-1. UMBC-A's FM Bruci Lopez played a nice attacking game against IM Jacek Stopa that culminated in a deadly queen sacrifice, while Boskovic and I had draws.

### A deadly queen sac

*IM Jacek Stopa, UTD-B (2471)  
FM Bruci Lopez, UMBC-A (2468)  
(4), 12.29.2007*



*Black to play*

28. ... Qxb2+! 29. Kxb2 Bxd4+ 30. Kc1 Ra1+, White resigned.

On board four, WGM Katerine Rohonyan (known as "The Kiev Killer") put the screws on UTD-B's FM Keaton Kiewra.

### "Kiev killer" kills Keaton Kiewra

*WGM Katerine Rohonyan, UMBC-A (2312)*

*FM Keaton Kiewra, UTD-B (2329)*

*(4), 12.29.2007*



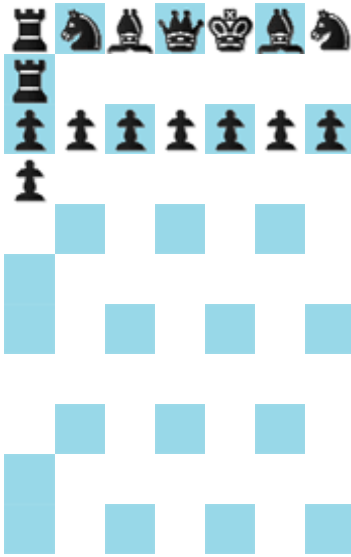
*White to play*

**34. Re5 g6 35. Re1 Kg7 36. Rb1 Kf6 37. Rb5 Rd8 38. Ke2 Rb8 39. Rxc5 Rg8 40. Rcc7 Rg7 41. Kd3 Rbg8 42. c5 Rd8 43. c4 Rb8 44. c6 Rd8 45. Rcb7 Rc8 46. c5 Rh7 47. Kc4 Rg7 48. Kb5 Rh7 49. c4 Rg7 50. Ka6 Rh7 51. Rxe7, Black resigned.**

On table one, UTD-A had a surprisingly tough go of it against Stanford. Over four hours of play passed without a game being decided. FM Igor Schneider proved to be the hero when he defeated Patrick Mihelich in a double-rook endgame to save a narrow 2½-1½ UTD victory. Matthew Ho (2278), Daniel Schwarz (2258), and Kartik Viswanathan (2183) played well above their ratings to hold GM Magesh Panchanathan (2534) and IMs Davorin Kuljasevic (2494) and Salvijus Bercys (2485) to hard-fought draws. Stanford assembled a great squad this year but fell short in the last three rounds by losing 2½-1½ in each match.

It was apparent to everyone that the winner of the round five UTD-A vs. UMBC-A match would become the 2007 champions. Predicting the lineups wasn't difficult, as both schools came "locked-'n-loaded" with grandmasters on boards one and two. UTD-A arguably had the greatest advantage on board four, where IM Bercys had white against WGM Rohonyan (2312).

The board one match up of GM Sergey Erenburg-GM Alejandro Ramirez was the first game to finish (1-0). Clearly this put the pressure squarely on UTD. I roomed with Ramirez during the tournament and got to see first-hand how he prepares for games. Erenburg's decision to play the main-line Sveshnikov was a big surprise for Alejandro, who had pegged him as a c3-Sicilian specialist. At any rate, our players fought back admirably. Magesh Panchanathan demolished GM Pawel Blehm's Classical Sicilian in a game that seemed extremely one-sided.

**2007 Pan-American Championships****White:** Panchanathan**Black:** Blehm

**1.**e4 c5 **2.**Nf3 Nc6 **3.**d4 cxd4 **4.**Nxd4 Nf6  
**5.**Nc3 d6 **6.**Bg5 e6 **7.**Qd2 a6 **8.**O-O-O h6  
**9.**Be3 Bd7 **10.**f3 Rc8 **11.**Kb1 Be7 **12.**g4 b5  
**13.**h4 b4 **14.**Nce2 d5 **15.**Nxc6 Bxc6  
**16.**Nd4 Bb7 **17.**e5 Nd7 **18.**f4 Qc7 **19.**Bd3 Bc5  
**20.**g5 hxg5 **21.**hxg5 Rxh1 **22.**Rxh1 Qb6  
**23.**Qf2 g6 **24.**Rh8+ Ke7 **25.**Rh7 Rg8  
**26.**Bxg6 Rxg6 **27.**f5 exf5 **28.**Qxf5 Kd8  
**29.**Rxf7 Nf8 **30.**Rxf8+ Bxf8 **31.**Qxf8+ Kc7  
**32.**e6 Rxe6 **33.**Qf7+ Kb8 **34.**Qxe6 1-0

**Sicilian Defense, Richter-Rauzer Attack (B66)***GM Magesh Panchanathan, UTD-A (2534)**GM Pawel Blehm, UMBC-A (2584)**(5), 12.29.2007***1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Bg5**

The Richter-Rauzer has given Black countless headaches in recent years. Many grandmasters have abandoned the Classical Sicilian solely because of this system.

**6. ... e6 7. Qd2 a6 8. O-O-O h6 9. Be3**

Also scoring well for White is 9. Nxc6 bxc6 10. Bf4 d5 11. Qe3.

**9. ... Bd7 10. f3 Rc8**

Blehm produces a rather obscure move. By far, 10. ... b5 is currently the most popular option.

**11. Kb1 Be7 12. g4**

Herein lies the major problem for Black: king safety. With a pawn on h6 and White's automatic plan of h2-h4 and g4-g5, castling short is out of the question. Thus the king will be stuck in the center where its future is questionable.

**12. ... b5 13. h4!**

White's plan is brutally direct: rip apart Black's defenses in the center and on the kingside.

**13. ... b4 14. Nce2 d5 15. Nxc6 Bxc6 16. Nd4 Bb7 17. e5 Nd7 18. f4 Qc7**

Playing into White's hands is 18. ... Bxh4, i.e. 19. Qxb4 (the direct 19. f5!? is also strong) 19. ... Rb8 20. Qa4.

**19. Bd3 Bc5**

Black's position collapses amazingly fast after this move. 19. ... Nc5 was the only reasonable alternative, although after 20. g5 Nxd3 21. Qxd3 (21. cxd3 hxg5 22. hxg5 Rxh1 23. Rxh1 g6 24. Rh8+ Kd7 25. Rh7 also looks promising 25. ... Ke8) 21. ... Qc4 22. Qd2 hxg5 23. fxg5!? g6 24. h5! gxh5 25. g6 it is doubtful Black can survive.

**20. g5 hxg5 21. hxg5 Rxh1 22. Rxh1 Qb6 23. Qf2 g6 24. Rh8+ Ke7 25. Rh7 Rg8?**

Playing 25. ... Ke8 would avoid White's next move, though Black remains in a very unenviable situation.

**26. Bxg6!**

Crashing through. Black is completely lost.

**26. ... Rxc6 27. f5 exf5 28. Qxf5 Kd8 29. Rxf7 Nf8**

It's lights out after: 29. ... Bc8 30. e6 Bxd4 31. Qxc6 Bxe3 32. e7+.

**30. Rxf8+ Bxf8 31. Qxf8+ Kc7 32. e6 Rxe6 33. Qf7+ Kb8 34. Qxe6, Black resigned.**

A remarkably smooth victory from Magesh.

Meanwhile, "Sal" meticulously took apart Rohonyan's position in a QGD Tarrasch and accurately converted an extra pawn into a full point.

### "Kiev Killer killed"

*IM Salvijus Bercys, UTD-A (2485)*

*WGM Katerine Rohonyan,*

*UMBC-A (2312) (5), 12.29.2007*

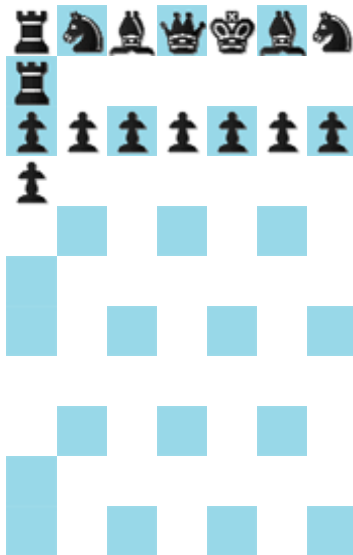


*White to play*

**52. Rg7! Rxc7 53. Kxc7 Be7 54. Be2+ Kc6 55. h5 Kd6 56. Kf7 Bg5 57. h6, Black resigned.**

After these wins, there was no doubt about victory as IM Davorin Kuljasevic always had the better side of a drawn game with Lopez. Nearly the entire UTD team crowded the railing during the match to lend their support, and when the match victory was secure it was all smiles for players, teammates, and coach IM Rade Milovanovic. UTD would retain its position atop college chess for another year.

The other big story was the stunning upset of New York University (NYU) (2176) over UTB-A. NYU pulled out a 2½-1½ win to move into great final-round position. NYU first board Mackenzie Molner played very resourcefully to hold GM Axel Bachmann to a scrappy draw.



### 2007 Pan-American/Intercollegiate Championships

**White:** Bachmann, Axel

**Black:** Molner, Mackenzie

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.g3 Bg7  
 5.Bg2 O-O 6.Nge2 e5 7.O-O c6 8.a4 Na6  
 9.h3 exd4 10.Nxd4 Re8 11.Re1 d5  
 12.exd5 Rxe1+ 13.Qxe1 Nxd5  
 14.Nxd5 Bxd4 15.Ne7+ Kg7 16.Qd2 Be6  
 17.Bxc6 bxc6 18.Nxc6 Bxf2+ 19.Qxf2 Qd5  
 20.Nd4 Bxh3 21.b3 Nc5 22.Bb2 f6  
 23.Re1 Rf8 24.Re7+ Kg8 25.Qe2 Rf7  
 26.Re8+ Kg7 27.Kh2 Bd7 28.Re3 Bc8  
 29.c4 Qd7 30.Qf1 Bb7 31.Qf4 Bc8  
 32.Kg1 Qh3 33.Nf3 Bb7 34.Re7 Qf5

### Pirc Defense (B07)

*GM Axel Bachmann, UTD-A (2598)*

*Mackenzie Molner, NYU (2348)*

*(5), 12.29.2007*

**1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. g3**

A relatively quiet system. 4. f4 is still considered to be the acid test of the Pirc.

**4. ... Bg7 5. Bg2 O-O 6. Nge2 e5 7. O-O c6 8. a4 Na6 9. h3 exd4 10. Nxd4 Re8 11. Re1**

According to my database, 20 games have reached this position.

**11. ... d5?!**

A novelty of dubious worth. Black should be careful about opening the position so soon.

11. ... Nb4 is a much more logical way to prepare the ... d5 break. A recent high-level blitz game continued 12. Bf4 (12. a5 d5 13. e5 Ne4! 14. Nxe4 dxe4 15. c3 Nd3 16. Rxe4 Nxc1 17. Qxc1 Rxe5 18. Rxe5 Bxe5 19. Qe3 led to a quick draw in GM Gilberto Hernandez Guerrero (2525)-Jesus Nogueiras (2535)/Cienfuegos 1991.) 12. ... d5 13. exd5 Rxe1+ 14. Qxe1 c5! 15. Ndb5 Nxc2 16. Qd1 Nxa1 and Black won easily in Nepomniachtchi, Ian (2613)-Grischuk, Alexander (2726)/ Moscow RUS 2007.

**12. exd5 Rxe1+ 13. Qxe1 Nxd5 14. Nxd5 Bxd4 15. Ne7+! Kg7 16. Qd2!?**

A simple route to a sizable edge is 16. Nxc8 Rxc8 17. c3 Bf6 18. Be3. The two bishops rule the open board and Black would be hard-pressed to find any meaningful counterplay. Bachmann's move leads to sharp play.

**16. ... Be6!**

Molner finds the best move after a long think. Likely he was weighing the consequences of 16. ... Bxf2+ 17. Qxf2 Qxe7 18. Be3 when Black's weak dark squares don't promise him an easy game, i.e. 18. ... c5 (18. ... Be6 19. Bxa7 c5 20. Bb6) 19. Re1 Be6 20. Bd2 Re8 21. Bc3+ Kg8 22. Bxb7! Nb4 23. Bg2

**17. Bxc6!**

The only way to keep the fire burning. 17. Qh6+ Kh8 18. Qh4 Bg7! leaves White's knight in a precarious situation.

**17. ... bxc6 18. Nxc6 Bxf2+ 19. Qxf2 Qd5 20. Nd4**

An interesting alternative is 20. Ne7!? Qd6 21. Bg5 Bxh3 22. Re1. Play could continue 22. ... f6 23. Bf4 Qd7 24. Qe2! (preventing ... Re8 and hitting the a6- knight) 24. ... Nc7 25. Bxc7 Qxc7 26. Kh2 Qd7 with a very complex position the continuation 20. Nxa7 Rxa7 21. Qxa7 Qd1+ 22. Kf2 Qxc2+ 23. Kg1 Qd1+ leads to perpetual check.

**20. ... Bxh3 21. b3**

Bachmann elects to place the bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal. Rybka recommends the energetic 21. c4!? when 21. ... Qxc4 loses the queen after 22. Bh6+ Kxh6 23. Qf4+ in view of 24. Nf5+. Black should probably play 21. ... Qh5 or 21. ... Qb7 with a slightly inferior position.

**21. ... Nc5 22. Bb2 f6?!**

Creating an annoying weakness. Removing the king from the crosshairs with 22. ... Kg8 is best.

**23. Re1 Rf8? 24. Re7+?**

Playing 24. Ba3! pinpoints the inaccuracy of Black's last move by threatening 25. Bxc5 followed by 26. Ne6+. A response like 24. ... Kg8 (24. ... Rc8) is met with the clever retreat 25. Ne2! Ne4 26. Nf4 Qb7 27. Rxe4 Qxe4 28. Bxf8 Kxf8 29. Nxh3 winning. Black would be forced to admit his mistake with 24. ... Rc8, allowing White's rook to land on e7 unopposed.

**24. ... Kg8?**

It's unclear why Black rejected the immediate 24. ... Rf7. Perhaps he was afraid of 25. Ne6+ but the calm 25. ... Bxe6 26. Qxf6+ Kf8 leaves him with a completely won position.

**25. Qe2?**

Better is 25. Qf3!, the last chance to exploit Black's rickety position. White's more active pieces and 3-1 queenside majority give every chance for a win even after a queen swap: 25. ... Qxf3 (25. ... Qg5 26. Rxa7 Re8 27. Ra8) 26. Nxf3 Nd7 a) 26. ... Rf7 27. Re8+ Kg7 28. Ng5!; b) 26. ... Bg4 27. Nh2 Bd1 28. Rxa7 Ne4 (28. ... Bxc2 29. Rc7) 29. Rc7 Nxf3 30. a5 and White's pawns ensure victory; 27. Bd4 a5 (27. ... Rc8 28. c4 a6 29. Nd2 Bf5 30. b4; 27. ... a6 28. Ng5!) 28. Nd2 (28. Ng5!? Bf5 29. Ne6 Bxe6 30. Rxe6 is possibly even stronger) 28. ... Rc8 29. Nc4 and Black still has quite a few problems to solve.

**25. ... Rf7!**

Now Black has secured his position. There is still a lot to play for, but neither side does much to disturb the dynamic equilibrium.

**26. Re8+ Kg7 27. Kh2 Bd7 28. Re3 Bc8 29. c4 Qd7 30. Qf1 Bb7 31. Qf4 Bc8 32. Kg1 Qh3 33. Nf3 Bb7 34. Re7 Qf5 35. Qxf5 gxf5 36. Re3**

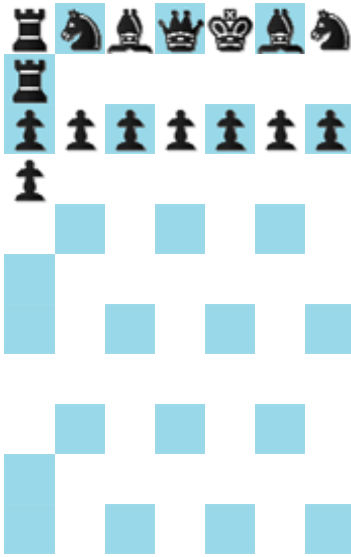
An attempt to get things rolling on the queenside is 36. Rxf7+ Kxf7 37. Nd4 Be4 38. a5 Nd3 39. Bc3, but White will always have to reckon with kingside counterplay with ... h5 and ... f4.

**36. ... Rd7 37. Nd4 Kg6 38. a5 Be4 39. Bc3 h5 40. b4 Nd3 41. b5 Rc7 42. b6 axb6 43. axb6 Rb7 44. Ba5 Ne5 45. c5**

Bachmann wisely heads for a draw. 45. Rc3 Rd7! 46. Nb3 Rd1+ 47. Kf2 Rb1 affords Black considerable counterchances.

**45. ... Nc4 46. c6 Bxc6 47. Nxc6 Nxe3 48. Nd8 Rb8 49. Nc6 Rb7 50. Nd8 Rb8 51. Nc6, Draw agreed.**

Evan Rosenberg (2156), third board for NYU, scored a critical win in this match against WIM Nadya Ortiz (2226). Here are his annotations to this game.

**2007 Pan-American Championships****White:** Ortiz**Black:** Rosenberg

**1.**e4 c6 **2.**d4 d5 **3.**Nd2 dxe4 **4.**Nxe4 Bf5  
**5.**Nc5 b6 **6.**Nb3 e6 **7.**Nf3 Nd7 **8.**g3 Qc7  
**9.**Bg2 Rd8 **10.**Qe2 Ngf6 **11.**O-O Bd6  
**12.**c4 O-O **13.**Re1 c5 **14.**h3 Be4  
**15.**Be3 cxd4 **16.**Nbxd4 Qb7 **17.**Red1 Bc5  
**18.**Nb5 Ne5 **19.**Ne1 Bxe3 **20.**fxe3 Bxg2  
**21.**Nxg2 Ne4 **22.**Kh2 Qe7 **23.**Rd4 Ng5  
**24.**Rf1 Nc6 **25.**Rdd1 Rxd1 **26.**Rxd1 Rd8  
**27.**Nd4 Ne5 **28.**Nf4 Qb7 **29.**h4 Ngf3+  
**30.**Nxf3 Rxd1 **31.**Qxd1 Nxf3+ **32.**Kh3 g6  
**33.**g4 Ne5 **34.**g5 h5 **35.**b3 Qe4

**Caro-Kann, Classical (B18)***WIM Nadya Karolina Ortiz, UTB-A (2226)**Evan Rosenberg, NYU (2156)**(5), 12.29.2007**Notes by Evan Rosenberg*

**1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Bf5 5. Nc5 b6 6. Nb3 e6 7. Nf3 Nd7**

Another promising continuation for Black is 7. ... Nf6 8. g3 a5 9. Bg2 a4 10. Nbd2 a3. I didn't remember any theory in this variation; however I was aware of White's plan to fianchetto the light-square bishop. So I decided to remove everything from the h1-a8 diagonal and just sensibly develop my pieces.

**8. g3 Qc7 9. Bg2 Rd8 10. Qe2 Ngf6 11. O-O Bd6 12. c4 O-O 13. Re1 c5 14. h3 Be4**

I was proud of this move—I think Black is, positionally at least, equal here.

**15. Be3 cxd4 16. Nbxd4 Qb7**

I was considering the prophylactic 16. ... a6 followed by ... e6-e5, but I thought the game continuation was straightforward and consistent with 14. ... Be4.

**17. Red1 Bc5 18. Nb5 Ne5 19. Ne1 Bxe3**

Slightly more accurate is 19. ... Bxg2, so White doesn't have the option of capturing on g2 with the queen, which is superior to the game where White recaptured with the knight.

**20. fxe3 Bxg2 21. Nxg2 Ne4 22. Kh2 Qe7 23. Rd4 Ng5**

23. ... f5 looks good too, with the threat of 24. ... Qg5.

**24. Rf1**

I was hoping White would mistakenly play 24. Rf4, which allows the pretty 24. ... Rd2.

**24. ... Nc6 25. Rdd1 Rxd1**

At this point I believed that trading pieces off would be advantageous to me because of my better long-term pawn structure.

**26. Rxd1 Rd8 27. Nd4 Ne5 28. Nf4 Qb7 29. h4 Ngf3+**

Another option was 29. ... Ne4. I had completely missed the potential threat of ... Nf2. My move relieves a little bit of the pressure but maintains the favorable endgame advantages.

**30. Nxf3 Rxd1 31. Qxd1 Nxf3+ 32. Kh3 g6 33. g4 Ne5 34. g5**

After this White can't contain the entrance of Black's queen and knight infiltrating the kingside. I think White underestimated my reply, which is essentially forced.

**34. ... h5 35. b3 Qe4 36. Qe2 Ng4 37. Kg3**

Black can win the pawn regardless because if 37. Ng2 Qe5 forces the knight away from the defense of e3.

**37. ... Nxe3 38. Ng2 Nf5+ 39. Kf2 Qd4+ 40. Ke1 Nxf4 41. Ne3 Qf4**

My teammates chastised me for not playing 41. ... Qxe3, however in a situation where I was very short of time I didn't want to get involved with calculating the ending with White creating a passed c-pawn. Obviously 41. ... Qxe3 is winning for Black, but I was happy to avoid it.

**42. Nc2 Nf3+ 43. Kd1 Nxf5 44. b4 Ne4 45. Ne3 Nc3+, White resigned.**

Rosenberg summed up his school's accomplishments nicely:

"The Pan-Ams were an enormous success for NYU. The team had great chemistry, and I joked that the Jacksonville Jaguars remind me of the 2007 NYU Pan-Am Intercollegiate team. Of course, that was before they lost to the New England Patriots in the [NFL] playoffs, but everyone understood my point.

"Molner is capable of serious upsets on board one, made evident by his critical draw against Bachmann, and the solidity of strong experts on the remaining boards proved dangerous."

In the final round, UTD-A played a quick 2-2 draw with NYU. This was just fine for both teams: UTD-A clinched sole victory and NYU secured a spot in the Final Four of College Chess. UMBC-A also claimed their place with a last-round victory, while Miami-Dade College-A (2290) squeaked through on tiebreaks to claim the final spot.

Thanks are in order to Miami Dade College for hosting the event, and to tournament director Jon Haskel for running a very smooth tournament. The Pan-Ams have a real relaxed atmosphere in which you get to see long-lost chess players who may not play so much upon entering college. Hopefully the event will continue for many years to come.

*See full results at <http://bocachess.com/2007panam>, and a game database at [monroi.com](http://monroi.com). Additional reporting by IM John Bartholomew at Chess Life Online, [uschess.org](http://uschess.org) (December 2007 archives). UTD, UMBC, NYU, and Miami Dade College will now compete in the Final Four this spring at UMBC.*

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