

All the right moves — Teen makes his mark in chess world

By Lisa Roose-Church
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS



Andrew Schilleman is red-hot.

At least, the 15-year-old Howell High School sophomore appears to be as he picked off chess opponents to capture the title at the Michigan Chess Association-sponsored championship tournament held March 15-16 at Oakland University.

"I love chess," Schilleman said.

The Genoa Township teen will receive a \$250 scholarship and will represent Michigan at the 2008 Denker Tournament of High School Champions sponsored by the U.S. Chess Federation, to be held Aug. 2-5 at the Hyatt Regency in [Atlanta, Ga.](#)

The winner of the Denker tournament receives a full scholarship, valued at \$68,000 for an out-of-state student, to the [University of Texas at Dallas](#) as well as a cash prize.

His mother, Jennie Schilleman, said his accomplishment is impressive considering he has only been playing two years. Many kids get a start in elementary school.

"He's done so well so quickly," she said about her son. "I'm impressed."

Schilleman became interested in chess when his older brother, Matt, challenged him to a game one summer.

"He always beat me," Schilleman said.

That soon changed.

Schilleman began studying the game and practicing by playing opponents online who were better.

He then challenged his brother and won. He has been winning, mostly, ever since.

Schilleman's rating is 1,950 and he is ranked 30th by the U.S. Chess Federation for 15-year-olds. A rating of 2,000 is considered an expert, he said.

He is going to prepare for the Denker by studying with a grandmaster.

"I'm looking forward to it," Schilleman said.

The Denker is a six-round Swiss style tournament held at the same time as the U.S. Open. The prestigious event is held in the memory of grandmaster Arnold Denker, who helped found and fund it for

more than 20 years. Today, [scholarships](#) totaling \$2,000 are given to the top five finishers through Denker's son, Mitchell, and the U.S. Chess Trust.

His goal is to be a grandmaster. In the meantime, he enjoys snowboarding and spending time with his family and friends.

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