

Dr. Peter Knopf hurries to move against Mark Hulse in speed chess. The variation allows an average of 10 to 15

Unorthodox Sicilians

Speed chess just harder

By ANDY WILLIAMS
Battalion Staff

Two men sit hunched over a chess board in a cluttered office of Milner Hall. Their movements are not the leisurely ones associated with the game. Their hands flash to the pieces and slap off the switch of a double-faced clock that records playing time. The players, Dr. Dusan Djuric and Mark Hulse, are two of the best at Texas A&M University, according to U.S. Chess Federation ratings. The game is speed chess.

Speed chess is a variation of the regular game. Each player is allowed five minutes of playing time. In ordinary chess tournament play, each player is required to make 40 moves in two-and-a-half hours.

The game is obviously turning in Djuric's favor. The fact is less apparent from the position on the board, where Hulse's king becomes increasingly isolated, than from the excited comments from Dr. Peter Knopf, in whose office the game is being played.

Hulse, Knopf, and Dr. Roger Smith tied for first place in a recent standard chess tournament at Texas A&M. Smith and Knopf are professors in the math departments; Hulse is an undergraduate microbiology student. Djuric, a professor of meteorology, is the faculty adviser of the Chess Club.

The group's conversation about the game is quick and eager. "Dr. Smith is a very good player, very steady," Hulse says. "Peter studied the openings. I just... well, I should have lost a couple of games" (in the Texas A&M tournament, held Oct. 14).

"Mark is a very good tactical player," Knopf adds. "I would say he is as good as Roger at speed chess. Roger, of course, can do everything."

Smith, ranked a master by the U.S. Chess Federation, is generally considered the best player on the campus, Knopf said. Knopf, who defeated Smith in the Oct. 14 matches, had played only one tournament before.

"Let's just say that does not happen very often," Hulse said. "I played an unorthodox variation of the Sicilian defense," Knopf said.

Questions about forms for the game that vary significantly from standard chess (such as four-player or three dimensional chess) are met with less enthusiasm. "Chess is so complicated there is no need to complicate it further," Djuric says.

The group is also slightly scornful of chess played by computers and machines. "The human mind is much superior to the computer," Djuric says.

"At the present time," Knopf adds, "inexperienced players really don't know what to do with the pieces," Knopf says. "It's a question of considering the right 10 or 12 moves."

seconds a move.

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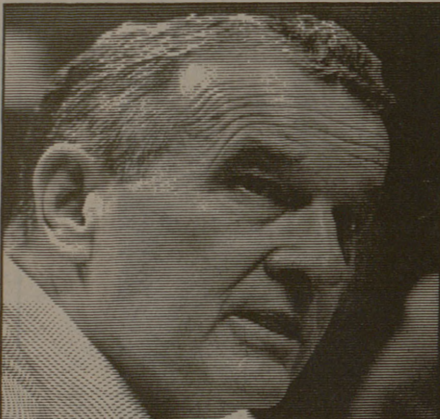
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