



Photographs by John Medina

Lucas Nguyen, 7, looks over the board during a recent Kolty Chess Club tournament held at the Campbell Community Center. The club meets every Thursday night.

Kolty Chess Club attacks the board weekly using all the right moves

By EMILIE CROFTON

Members of the Kolty Chess Club are not pawns in the game.

Gary Kelly, who has been coming to play chess at Campbell Community Center for the past seven years, says chess is all about pattern recognition, anticipation and even stamina.

"The mental work involved is very tiring," Kelly says. "The best players realize the importance of being physically active as well."

Kelly says it's the uniqueness and intellectuality of chess that draws him to the game.

"Each game is always different," Kelly says. "The game I play tonight won't be the same as any other chess game I've played in the past, and I've been playing 40 years."

Every Thursday evening the club meets at Campbell Community Center for lectures and lessons at 6:30 p.m., followed by rated tournaments and open play at 7:30 p.m.

The club is open to players of all ages and skill levels. Some members are as young as 3, while others are well into their 70s.

Those not in a competitive mood can play "skittles," an untimed chess game, for fun. Some come just to learn from watching others.

Fred Leffingwell, the club director, schedules a number of tourna-



Nathan Horowitz ponders what to do next during tournament play at a weekly Kolty Chess Club meeting in Campbell.

ments throughout the year, each tournament lasting five to seven weeks.

Lev Fieldman, an immigrant from Ukraine, came to the United States 12 years ago and joined the chess club within two months of his arrival.

"Chess is more than a hobby for me," Fieldman, 68, says. "It's in my blood."

Club member Mike Splane says

to be a good chess player, you have to be willing to spend time alone, working on the game. He adds that respect for opponents is important as well.

"You can't let losses bother you, even when you lose to a younger kid," Splane says. "The kids here are very competitive."

Recently Fieldman, a master chess player, lost to 15-year-old Steven Zierk, who is earning a reputation.

"It's all part of the game," Fieldman says.

Eight-year-old Kevin Tang admits the intellectual game of chess can be quite challenging but says that's why he enjoys it.

"It's fun," Tang says. "You have to think really hard when you get in trouble."

Kolty Chess Club is affiliated with the United States Chess Federation; a fee for membership and tournament play is required. Club lectures, demonstrations and open play are all free.

Campbell Community Center is located at 1 W. Campbell Ave.

For more information on the Kolty Chess Club, contact Fred Leffingwell at 408.902.8590 or visit www.ftfv.org.

For membership information on United States Chess Federation, visit www.uschess.org.

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