

York grad hones chess skills in correspondence tourney

By EDO VAN BELKOM

The last thing Ed Allenby needs is a postal strike.

Allenby, who graduated with a BA in Political Science in June and now works in the York University bookstore, has recently entered the World Correspondence Chess championship. The world championship is a tournament involving chess players from around the world, competing against each other through the mail.

Allenby is entered in the Canadian Correspondence Chess championship and is a member of its association. By being a lifetime member of the Chess Federation of Canada he is indirectly a lifetime member of Sport Canada. Allenby connects chess to sport by saying, "to some extent it's a sport. There is an inherent strain in some chess matches that has been compared to a 15-round boxing match."

Allenby uses the mail route to hone his skills for the over the board



CHECKMATE: Ed Allenby waits patiently in line at York's post office, holding the winning move in his hand.

matches, because he feels he can learn more from his numerous books on the game while playing through the post. "I use these tournaments as

training for over the board matches. I can use a variety of books that I can't use in a regular game.

"I keep track with a scorecard,"

said Allenby, who is involved in more than one tournament at a time. "But I do set up the board occasionally just to make sure of position."

Playing by correspondence takes time and money. Entire tournaments takes anywhere from a year to 18 months complete, and with approximately 30 moves per game Allenby figures he spends from 75 to 100 dollars a year on postage. It may sound like a lot of money but the cost of 34 cents for each post card is spread out over a long period of time.

By competing in big tournaments like the World Cup, Allenby has made a few acquaintances around the globe. The longest distance Allenby has played was a match with a player in South Africa. However, the International Chess Federation no longer allows players to compete in matches because of the Apartheid system in that country.

Allenby has never won a tournament but has played around the 500 mark and feels satisfied with his results. "I feel I was successful in the tournaments because I was playing one level higher than my rating," Allenby said. Chess players are rated according to ability and past successes.

Here at York Allenby has tried to get some serious tournaments off the ground but has found it difficult because of the other commitments of students. "I've tried to get serious chess going on campus but students are generally interested in just casual games."

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