



Submitted Photo

CHESS RAMS — Mt. Vernon Township High School chess team members competed in the recent state chess meet in Peoria. During their trip they met the 2008 world champion in chess Yury Shulman. MVTHS students competing at state posing with Shulman include, FROM LEFT, Herbert Fox, James Campise, Daniel Arcuri, Darrell Haynes, Adam Brazell, Shulman, Jeffrey Wright, Brandon WilliamsMeeks and Alex Richards.

Rams chess team competes at state meet

SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

PEORIA — In one sense, Mt. Vernon Township High School chess team failed at the recent state chess meet.

In another sense, arguably a far more important sense, the chess Rams won at the recent state chess meet.

"I was very proud of our team in the way they conducted themselves," MVTHS chess Coach Bill England said. "Depending on what our goal is, we either had a very successful meet or we failed.

If your only goal was to come in first — we failed — we came in 114th out of 129 teams. But my goal, as a coach, involves more than winning or losing. I'm working to help these students grow as individuals, to become responsible, productive adults. Part of that is learning how to adjust to changing situations, both on the chess board and in life.

"Attitude and sportsmanship are things we value on our chess team. I've told the

students whether they win or lose is not my priority. What is important is whether or not they always give their best. I cannot ask for anything more, but I will not accept anything less.

"In one meet that we had earlier this year, one of the students won her first game. She was upset. She won by default, her opponent did not show up. She did not want to win by default; she wanted to get to play. I was very proud of her."

During their trip to Peoria the chess Rams met the 2008 world champion in chess — Yury Shulman.

"Yes it's fun to win — we've won a few times this year, but I think it's more important that the students get to play. What good is winning if you don't get to play? I remind these students that their self-worth does not depend on winning this game. It is a game and sometimes we for-

get that as coaches, parents and spectators, and even as participants," England said.

"First place, fame and glory are temporary. No matter how good you become, someday someone else will be better."

That lesson was brought home to the chess Rams at Peoria when they met the 2008 world champion in chess Shulman. Although he was the top of the chess world in 2008, last year, he lost.

"On our chess team we're trying to work on things that will last; a good attitude, good sportsmanship, teamwork and perseverance. Chess, like other sports, is just a game. It's what we teach with it that's important," England said.

England said team members play chess from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday in his classroom, 115G. He said it is open to anyone who wants to either learn or play chess.

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