

# Chess team wins first in State comp.

by Eric Gardner

While most other teams at OCHS flounder in the win-loss department, the chess team has emerged as state champions.

Three years ago Oregon City fielded its first chess team. "Usually only three people played," said Richard Becker. "That first year there wasn't much interest." With only three out of five people competing OC managed only one win.

In their second season the chess team made a dramatic turnaround. They reversed from a 1 win 9 loss season to a 9 win and 1 loss season. Even though they competed in the state tournament the chess team was in relative obscurity at OCHS.

This year the third season was the best. "Our goal was to be first in state and beat Rex Putnam," said Alan Knowles.

Last year Rex Putnam was first in the Wilco League followed by Oregon City. The season opened November 17, with a match against Milwaukie, Oregon City won easily winning all games.

In a chess match the best player from one team plays the best player on the other. The second through fifth best on each team also play each other. Whatever team wins the most games out of the five wins the match.

OC went on to win all 10 of their regular season matches. "We just romped on everybody," says Mark Augenbaugh.

On February 20 and 21 Oregon

City maintained their undefeated record by winning all four of their matches in the Wilco League Tournament and became Wilco League champions.

The next weekend at Portland State University the Pioneers achieved the goal they set at the beginning of the year, they won the State championship. OC won all four of their matches at the tournament to up their season record to 18 wins and no defeats.

Competing for the team are Richard Becker playing Board 1, Alan Knowles playing Board 2, Dan Knowles playing Board 3, Mark Augenbaugh playing Board 4, and Tim Misley playing Board 5 and John Philips and Keith Orenas as alternates.

All of the top five players were on the team last year, everyone except for Dan Knowles, the team captain, will be back next year.

Losing Dan will hurt the team next year because according to Richard Becker, "Dan is our most consistent winner." Dan has known both the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat from playing on all three Oregon City chess teams.

Despite the loss of their captain Richard still predicts, "We'll be first in district next year."

The team is expecting some good players coming in from the junior highs. "Gardiner and Moss are going to start chess programs through clubs and mini-courses," says Richard Becker.

The season isn't officially over yet, March 20 is the date for the

Western regionals to be held in California, but it costs money to get to the regionals and it's doubtful that the school will put up the money. "We need a minimum of \$600," says Alan Knowles. Thus far the chess teams making drives have been less than

successful." If anyone wants to donate some money to the chess team turn it in to our advisors," Alan said.

The advisors are Mr. Mayer, Mr. McCorkle and Mr. Krause.

By winning the state cham-

pionship, Oregon City is eligible for the national tournament in Cleveland in late April. According to Alan Knowles, "It would cost \$2,000 to go to the nationals. We'd need a company to sponsor us if we were to go to the Nationals."



**STATE CHAMPION CHESS TEAM:** Richard Becker, John Philips, Keith Drew, Mark Aughenbaugh, Alan Knowles, Tim Misley and Danny Knowles display State [on left] and district trophies. Oregon City is now eligible for National competition taking place in late April.



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