



IN A THRILLING GAME OF "CONTIG," Rebecca Helm and Andrew Dempewolf met Tuesday morning. Rebecca had already made her math sentence and was counting how many points she could subtract from her score while Andrew watched.



TYLERSAUVAGELOOKED for his next strategic move Thursday morning in a chess match. The object is to prevent your opponent from "checking" your king piece.



RUBBING HER FOREHEAD, Jennifer Ploussard tried to make a math sentence which would give her the best score during a game of "contig" Tuesday morning at Oberlin Elementary School.

Math game, chess add fun to classrooms

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

Students at Oberlin Elementary School put their thinking caps on Tuesday and Thursday morning for "contig" and chess tournaments before school.

The kids learned the games in class. The first was contig, which is short for contiguous, said Christie Morris, enrichment teacher at the school. The game, full of math, is taught to the fifth graders. There is a board with numbers on it. Outer squares have lower numbers and you move to the center, the numbers reach into the hundreds.

A player rolls the three dice and then has to use the numbers on the dice to make a math sentence, using subtraction, addition, multiplication or division. They have to say the sentence out loud to their opponent and then they place their red or blue piece on the square with the number. Players start with 60 points and get points taken off for each move.

The object of the game is to get the lowest points. Mrs. Morris said she has been doing contig tournaments for the last three years. Tuesday morning, the kids were ready to go and tried their hardest to get the lowest points possible.

The kids start learning the game in the classroom and then in October they move to the library for tournament-style playing. Mrs. Morris said

that they use double elimination for both the contig and chess tournaments.

Students in the sixth grade learn chess, she said. She started chess because it is a strategy game and strategic thinking is one of the things in which enrichment is supposed to help.

"I have had a really positive response from the kids," she said. A graph in the school's media center, or library, tracks winners of all the events in both games.

Media Center Specialist Shanna Richards said that the students have gotten so into chess that they have started to download the game onto computers at school and at home. She said that she allows them to play because it is educational, as long as they don't sit there and chat.

Enough kids are playing, she said, that they have figured out how to play each other on separate computers and are starting to recognize players' code names.

In March or April, Mrs. Morris said that the kids will have their final chess tournament. In the long run, she said, she'd love to see a chess club start at the junior high level, although she knows that kids are stretched thinner as they get older.

The third graders have learned a game, too, "Par 55," which works with shapes. Fourth graders are learning dominoes and dice, which is a math game, Mrs. Morris said.



PICKING UP A PIECE to help protect her king, Lauren Fortin searched the checkered board for the best possible move.

Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt