Chess supporter sets the table on public displays of addiction

ALL IN THE TIMING: Several places in Northeast Ohio — including Eton, Chagrin Boulevard — offer public areas for chess players.

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If more Cleveland school kids know their rook from their pawn, thank Mike Joelson.

He's president of Chess for Success, a nonprofit organization based in Cleveland Heights that provides chess instructors for more than 35 schools.

Northeast Ohio offers several places for aficionados to gather. Joelson explains why a public game is different from playing in your den.

Q: What is the etiquette of a public chess game?
A: Oftentimes, you can go up to a game and ask if it's OK if you have the winner. Also, sometimes these games are conducted with a chess timer, so they go fairly quickly. A standard speed chess period of time is five minutes per side.

Q: Is Cleveland considered a good chess town?
A: Cleveland has a good chess tradition. There's different environments. Like at Dewey's, they like to do a lot of trash talking. That's kind of standard. So if you trash talk at Dewey's, it's no big deal; but if you did it some other places...

Q: Is there any places around town where someone could find players to play with?
A: Sure, there are a number of places that you can go. Here are a few:

Eton, Chagrin Boulevard, near Barnes & Noble, 28601 Chagrin Blvd., Woodmere. Outdoor chess tables from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Edgewater Park, most evenings, bring your own board.

Dewey's Coffee House, 13201 Shaker Square, Cleveland. Most days 6-10:30 p.m.

Crocker Park, 25 Main St., Westlake. Outdoor chess tables, 10 a.m.-11 p.m.

Lakewood Chess Club, Lakewood Senior Center, 16024 Madison Ave., Lakewood. 7-10 p.m. Thursday.

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