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Game on: Student paid to play video games

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By **Dorian Davis**
Reporter

He's probably not printed on the poster above your bed, but Dallas sophomore Chris Su has signed enough autographs to know that he has established a reputation among gamers nationwide.

Su, a communication specialist major, has been competing in video game competitions since 2005.

"I started gaming real young," Su said.

Mentored by his cousin, Su developed his skills playing a variety of games as he grew older.

Though he invests most of his free time playing Halo 3, no game gets crossed off his list. "I play almost every one of them," Su said.

His status in the industry even allows him to play unreleased games, such as the awaited follow-up to Halo 3, Halo Reach.

Renowned as a professional gamer, Su considers himself more of an entrepreneur.

"My first time making money using video games was with Diablo 2," Su said.

Before becoming involved in organized competitions, Su found innovative ways to make money online by selling game character profiles he created that had excelled many levels in the game. Essentially, it would allow someone to skip a number of levels in a game for a fee.

"What you'll see a lot of people do now is say that they've invested a lot of time or work into the character," Su said.

True to his profession, Su is tentative to his mindset going into each game, equipping himself with a modified X-Box 2 controller, fine-tuned to his liking.

"A lot of people don't know this, but there's a piece of plastic inside that slows it down," Su said. "You have to open up the controller and sand down the interior."

In his most recent endeavor, Su was cast to coach his team at the Major League Gaming competition in Raleigh, N.C.

With 276 teams competing for a prize of \$20,000, Su's team was only five rounds away from winning when their hopes ended in a closely fought match.

"It helps to have an extra set of eyes. Usually, there are four to five guys on a team, along with a coach," Su said.

Major League Gaming, backed by sponsors such as Dr Pepper, is regarded as the most popular gaming league in the United States. Recently, it awarded a \$250,000 contract to one player.

Su's interest in Major League Gaming came when he was playing online one night with someone who informed him of the organization.

"About two years ago, ESPN would release MLG's top plays, and I would watch them," Su said.

After attending a Major League Gaming event in Dallas as a spectator, Su decided to begin competing in tournaments where he found success. As a student, Su stresses the competitiveness of Major League Gaming and the disadvantages placed upon him.

"You definitely have to find that balance," Su said. "A lot of the younger players have become better because they have more time."

While it's not likely Major League Gaming will be hosting a competition in Waco, there is definitely no shortage of organized play.

Lansharx, a video gaming center located in Waco, has become the exclusive hot spot for local gamers to convene.

For a fee, players are allowed to choose from a variety of games and consoles and compete with one another. They also hold special events, including "lock-ins" where people are invited to play all night.

"Occasionally we'll host tournaments with cash prizes based upon the amount of entry fees," said Chris Brad, manager of Lansharx. "Just recently, we hosted a Super-Street Fighter tournament."

Joplin, Mo., junior Jonmichael Seibert is also an avid video game player but chooses not to participate in organized competition.

"Competitive gameplay gets too stressful," Seibert said. "Most of the people I play with are from Baylor or people I knew in high school."

While Su feels blessed to be playing professionally, he has a greater appreciation for the relationships he has made in the industry. Eventually, he hopes to use his networking to find a job in the video game industry.

"I'd really like to work with MLG's marketing department and see them go international," Su said. "I don't think gaming is going away. I speak fluent Mandarin, so I would like to help bring it to China."

With his goals in place, Su knows the hard work ahead of him, but feels the gratification it will bring will be worth it.

"I can't imagine living my life any other way," Su said. "Doing my job and having fun at the same time."

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Makenzie Mason | Lariat Photographer

Professional video gamer, Chris Su, shows off his skills on August 31 in Castellaw Communications Center. Su juggles attending Baylor and being renowned in the video game world.

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