

Chess grandmaster to battle supercomputer

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The latest battle between man and machine will kick off at London's Wembley Centre on Tuesday afternoon, when UK's Michael Adams becomes the latest human chess player to take on a supercomputer.

In a contest that has echoes of Gary Kasparov's epic encounter with IBM's Deep Blue, Adams and the Hydra computer will play up to six games over the next week, for a prize fund of \$150,000 (£80,000). While Adams will be seated at Wembley, his opponent is remaining at its Abu Dhabi base.

Some experts are already predicting that Hydra will win the contest ? a result that could confirm that computers now outpunch even the best players when it comes to chess. But correspondence chess grandmaster Arno Nickel, who recently beat Hydra 2:0 in a correspondence chess match, has predicted that Adams could secure a 3:3 draw.

Hydra is a clustered system made up of 64 PCs each powered by a 3.06GHz Intel Xeon processor ? although it will just use 32 PCs during its battle with Adams. According to the team that developed Hydra, it can calculate 200 million moves per second, and look up to 40 moves ahead.

Adams is the UK's strongest chess player, and reached the rank of third in the world in 2002.

Adams vs Hydra comes almost a decade after Garry Kasparov fought, and beat, IBM's Deep Blue supercomputer in 1996. But the Russian player lost a rematch a year later.

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