

Top female 'shogi' pro falls to computer

Kyodo News

The top female "shogi" player lost a match against a computer system Monday in Tokyo, 35 years after work started on developing software that could beat a human player.

The game involving Ichiyo Shimizu, 41, lasted six hours and three minutes. Shimizu, a professional shogi, or Japanese chess, player, has won titles at 45 competitions, the most of any female player.



Power point: Ichiyo Shimizu, the top female "shogi" Japanese chess player, uses a computer projection to explain her strategy Monday at the Hongo campus of the University of Tokyo. KYODO PHOTO

"I couldn't use the (thinking) time in a well-balanced way. To be honest, I feel very frustrated," Shimizu said after the match.

The "Akara 2010" computer system chooses its next move from a majority answer shown by four independent shogi programs, including "Gekisahi," which won the world computer shogi championship earlier this year.

The Japan Shogi Association had prohibited professional players since October 2005 from playing against a computer system in public without permission.

The association gave its OK this time in response to a request from the Information Processing Society of Japan, a group of academic experts.

The last authorized match against a computerized opponent was in March 2007, when Akira Watabane, one of the top male players, defeated a system called "Bonanza."

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