

The Hastings International congress is one of the top events in the Chess calendar with several hundred entries. Such is its popularity the tournament had to be split up into different sections. One of these was the five round New Year Afternoon 'B' in which Hannah Dale was one of the participants.

In round 4 she was paired as black against Alan Papier from Hereford with the opening following the Yusupov-Rubinstein system 1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. e3 b6 4. Nbd2 Bb7 5. b3 d6 6. Bb2 Nbd7 7. c4 Be7 8. Bd3 c5 9. 0-0 0-0 and in a circumspect opening the battle lines are drawn on the c file, 10. Rc1 Rc8 11. Re1 h6 12. Bb1 Qc7 13. Qc2 cxd4 14. exd4 Rfe8 15. Qd1 Bd8 16. Ne4 Nxe4 17. Bxe4 Bxe4 18. Rxe4 f5 perhaps a risky move as the pawn on e6 is weakened (see diagram).

However Hannah has other ideas as 19. Re2 Nf6 20. Qd3 Ne4 the pawn on f5 generated an outpost for the knight 21. Nd2 Nxd2 22. Rxd2 Bg5 winning the exchange (22. Qxd2 Bg5 23. f4 is better for white) 23. Rc3 Bxd2 24. Qxd2 Qf7 25. Rg3 Kh7 and white still has some counterplay against the pawn on g7 26. d5 e5 27. f4 Rc7 28. fxe5 dxe5 29. Qe3 Qe7 30. Qd3 Qc5+ 31. Kf1 e4 and now Hannah's passed pawn is on the march.

Taking advantage 32. Qd1 Qd6 33. Qh5 g6 34. Qh4 e3 35. Bc1 e2+ 36. Ke1 Qb4+ 37. Bd2 and a neat finish 37. ... Qxd2+ 38. Kxd2 e1(Q)+ and white resigned.

Hannah finished as joint winner of her section with 4 points and was able to buy a late Christmas present with £80.

