

Hannah Dale's exploits in this year's British Championships at Ponds Forge in Sheffield are the subject in this week's game. Taking time out from her studies at Exeter University where she is reading English she entered the Open Major event where she found herself one of the lowest ranked players - 55th out of 77 players - with a FIDE grade of 1803 but had an exceptionally good year gaining 5½ points in the 11 round competition coming 41st with her performance over the fortnight giving her a grade of 1943.

Her best game came in round 9 where she was paired as black against Nicholas Mahoney from the Barnby Dun club in Yorkshire and we pick up the game after Nicholas has just played 21. Bd2 (see diagram). Already having a strong bishop on d4 Hannah's next move was to make further inroads into white's defense - can you see it?

Hannah played 21. ...Ne5 (white cannot play 22. fxe5 as Qxf3 follows) 22. Qe2 Bc8 23. Kg2 Ng4 24. h3 Nf2 and Hannah's knight is positioned in the heart of white's defense 25. Qh5 Bxh3+ 26. Kh2 Bg4 and now white's queen is in danger of being trapped.

In desperation, white now played 27. e5 dxe5 - losing a second pawn 28. Qg5 Qxg5 29. fxg5 Bf3 30. Be2 Bxc3 31. Bxc3 Bxd5 and a third pawn bites the dust and white's resignation came a few moves later.

Interestingly, post game analysis showed a more spectacular win after 27. e5. Had Hannah played 27. ...Rxe5 then 28. fxe5 Bxe5 would have meant that white's queen is trapped.

