

# The Doctor and Hou

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There were two events of great significance at the Tradewise tournament which recently finished at the Caleta Hotel in Gibraltar. One was the excellent showing of Dr Nigel Short MBE, who finished unbeaten first ahead of such luminaries as Svidler, Shirov, Mamedyarov, Adams. The second was the brilliant achievement by the 17-year-old girl Hou Yifan from China. Hou has already twice won the women's world title, and in Gibraltar she shone by crushing the former queen of chess, Judith Polgar, as well as tying with the Doctor for first prize in the main event. There is little doubt that this was the most impressive performance ever by a female player at this level.

In the play-off for first prize, Nigel defeated Hou with a win and a draw to take home £25,000, while Hou took the female prize of £10,000 and the second prize of £12,000.

**Muzychuk-Hou Yifan:** *Gibraltar Open Caleta 2012; Sicilian Defence*

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Qxd4** This is an attempt by White to avoid the main lines of the Sicilian. **4 ... Nc6 5 Bb5 Bd7 6 Bxc6 Bxc6 7 Nc3 e5 8 Qd3 h6 9 Nd2 Nf6 10 Nc4 b5** Commencing active play on the queenside. **11 Ne3 Qb6 12 Ncd5 Nxd5 13 Nxd5 Qb7** Black maximises pressure at d5, intending to get rid of the strong knight.

**14 Be3 Bxd5 15 exd5 Be7 16 0-0-0** (see diagram 1) Since White has no prospects of a kingside attack, opposite wing castling is unwise. **16 ... Rc8 17 f4 0-0 18 f5** 18 fxe5 dxe5 19 Rhf1 seems more logical. **18 ... Rc4 19 b3 e4 20 Qe2 Rc7 21 Kb1 Rfc8 22 Rhf1 22 Rd2 Bf6 23 Qg4 Bc3 24 Rdd1 Be5 25 Rd2 Bc3** could have led to a draw. **22 ... Qa6 23 Rf2 23 Rd2 Bf6** would also have presented difficulties, but would have been preferable. **23 ... Qa5** Exploiting the weak dark squares

Diagram 1

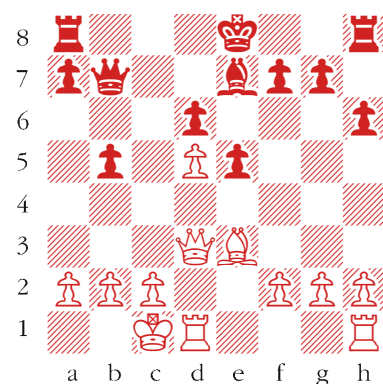
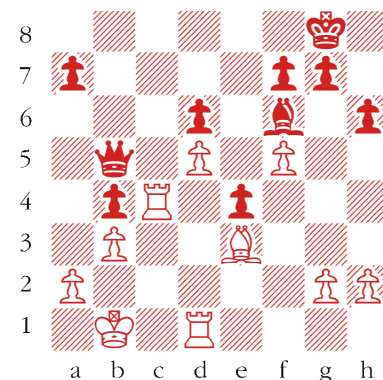


Diagram 2



in White's camp. **24 Bd4 Rxc2 25 Qxc2 Rxc2 26 Rxc2 b4 27 Be3 Qb5 28 Rc4 Bf6** (see diagram 2) **29 Bf4 29 Rxe4 Qe2 30 Re8+ Kh7 31 Rd2 Qe1+ 32 Kc2 Bc3 33 Rf2 Bd4** wins for Black. **29 ... Qb6 30 Rd2 Bc3 31 Re2 Qg1+** The infiltration proves deadly. **32 Kc2 Qa1 33 Rxe4 Qxa2+ 34 Kd3 Qxb3** There is no stopping the b-pawn now. **35 Ke2 Qc2+ 36 Kf3 Qd1+ 37 Kf2 Qxd5 38 g4 Kh7 39 Ke2 b3** White resigns

Notes based on those by eyewitness Dr Eric Schiller.

## PUZZLE NO. 205

Black to play. This position is from Short-Hou Yifan, 1st play-off game, Gibraltar 2012. In the decisive play-off game, which Hou lost, she could have turned the tables by finding the right move in this position. What should she have played? Answers to me at The Spectator by Tuesday 14 February or via email to victoria@spectator.co.uk or by fax on 020 7961 0058. The winner will be the first correct answer out of a hat, and each week I shall be offering a prize of £20. Please include a postal address and allow six weeks for prize delivery.

**Last week's solution** 1 Qxc6

**Last week's winner** John Patten, Cheshire

