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Jamie, 12, delighted to lift national chess title

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A YOUNG chess whiz has won a national tournament – after getting plenty of practice beating his dad.

Copthorne Preparatory School pupil, Jamie Ward, claimed the under-12 title at the London Junior Chess Competition on December 30.

Since taking up the game four years ago, the 12-year-old has been getting better and better, thanks in no small part to all the victories he has notched up over his dad, Tony.

His mum Alison said: "Jamie often plays his dad and we have a family rule that whoever loses the game has to put the board away.

"It is fair to say Jamie has not had to do that for a long time!"

An avid Crawley Town fan, he wore his favourite team's shirt as a lucky charm during the tournament.

The contest was held at the University of Westminster in Harrow and ran for three days with 58 players from all over the country competing in Jamie's category.

Each competitor played nine matches, with one point being given for a win and half a point for a draw.

Jamie, from Barber Close, Maidenbower, was crowned the winner after victories in seven matches, losing just one and drawing the other.

He said: "I felt quite confident going into it but to actually win was brilliant, especially because it was a big tournament.

"As it took place between Christmas and New Year I hadn't been practising as much as normal, but the day before I was playing as much as I could."

He was presented with a trophy and £100 for the victory.

Alison added: "Parents were not allowed to watch the matches, we all had to wait downstairs in the canteen.

"It was very tense throughout the three days because each match can last up to two-and-a-half hours, so I was sat there waiting to see him come round the corner and see if he was smiling.

"This was the first big tournament Jamie had taken part in by himself, he plays for a team as well and those events aren't as nerve-wracking because there are other players you can rely on.

"I am really proud of him."