

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition were in action when they visited near neighbours Leicestershire at the picturesque Thurmaston Village Hall just north of Leicester. Having won their first two matches Lincolnshire were in confident mood but Leicestershire are always difficult opponents so a close encounter was expected.

On board 3 Lincolnshire's Paul Cumbers was paired as white against Ray Burgess who plays for the Willowbrook club in Leicester with the players following the queen's gambit exchange variation 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Bg5 Be7 6. e3 0-0 7. Bd3 c6 8. Qc2 h6 9. Bh4 Re8 10. Nge2 Nbd7 11. 0-0 Ne4 and after an otherwise quiet opening with both players marshalling their troops Ray opened the game up with the knight advance.

Play continued 12. Bxe7 Qxe7 13. Rael Ndf6 14. f3 Nd6 and black elected to retreat his knight 15. Ng3 Be6 setting up a chance for Paul to begin a pawn advance 16. e4 Nc8 17. e5 Nd7 18. f4 Nf8 19. f5 Bd7 forcing black into a further succession of retreating moves (see diagram).

Paul finished off his opponent in quick style with 20. f6 gxf6 21. Nh5 f5 22. Nf6+ Kg7 23. Ne2 Rd8 24. Ng3 Be6 25. Ngh5+ Kh8 26. Qd2 and black resigned as he cannot prevent 27. Qxh6 without major loss of material.

Wins also for Louth's Harry Russell, Joe Kilshaw from Grimsby and Stephen Prior from Spalding, playing his first game for the county, together with draws for Nigel Birtwistle, Nick Payne, Daniel Wells, Keith Palmer, Geoff Collyer, Graham Ladds and Steve Allott was not quite enough as Leicestershire edged the tie by 8½ to 7½.

Follow the county scene on the web-site www.lincsches.org

