

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition were hosts to near neighbours Nottinghamshire at the Lindum Group Business Park in North Hykeham in the first round of the East Midlands zone. Last year Lincolnshire lost to Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and were thus eliminated at the zonal stage whilst Nottinghamshire not only won the Midland Counties competition but also reach the final of the national stages losing to Suffolk so Lincolnshire were in for a stiff test.

However, Lincolnshire captain Nigel Birtwistle has put together a good squad of players and this week we feature his game with Nigel was white playing against Andrew George from Newark and we pick up the game after black has just played 13. ...Be6 (see diagram).

Nigel played 14. b4 axb4 15. axb4 Nd4 and black has posted a menacing knight but has overlooked 16. bxc5 dxc5 17. Rxb7 and Nigel won the pawn.

Play continued 17. ...Rb8 18. Rxb8 Qxb8 19. Nxd4 cxd4 20. Nb5 and now Nigel is building an attack around his own menacing knight 20. ...f5 21. Bb4 Bf6 22. Qa4 Rd8 23. Ra1 Nc8 24. Qa6 Re8 25. Qc6 Nb6 26. Ra7+ Bg7 27. Bd6 Qc8 28. Qxb6 winning the knight for white - 27. ...Qd8 28. Bc7 would have the same effect. In desperation black played 28. ...Bxc4 hoping for 29. dxc4 Qxc4 but Nigel played 29. Rc7 and black resigned.

Wins also for Chris Dorrington, Stephen Prior, Joe Kilshaw, Alastair Summers and Graham Ladds plus draws for Claudio Mangione, Harry Russell, Kevin McCarthy, Andrew Hebert, Ian McDonald and Steve Allott gave Lincolnshire a 9-7 win.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the RAOB Club, 58 South Park on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. [www.lincolncchessclub.co.uk](http://www.lincolncchessclub.co.uk)

