

Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL (4 Nations Chess League) played in the first week end of this season's competition. At the start of last season Pandora's Box Grantham combined with Slough Sharks to form Grantham Sharks I and II, both playing in Division 1, with the Lincolnshire players forming the second string.

Having lost all their matches Grantham Sharks II were relegated and so found themselves playing in Division 2 section B and their first match of the week-end was against Wessex and on board 4 Grantham's Rupert Willis was paired as black against Ian Clark and we pick up the game after white has just played 26. Bxd4 (see diagram) materially equal with both having passed pawns.

Rupert played 26. ...Rxd4 27. cxd4 e3 sacrificing the exchange but allowing the passed e-pawn to advance 28. Nd3 Qe4 29. Qe2 Nd5 30. Rad1 Bxd4 31. Rf1 f5 32. gxf5 gxf5 33. Rc1 Kh8 34. Rf3 f4 35. Kf1 and now has two linked passed pawns for white to think about.

Black pressed on with 35. ...Rg8 36. Ne1 Qg6 37. Ng2 Qxg2+ 38. Qxg2 and looks to have lost his queen but played 38. ...e2+ 39. Kxe2 Rxg2+ (not 39. Qxe2 Rg1 mate) gaining further advantage and after a protracted defence by white black was able to force home the f-pawn and went on to win.

A win for Liam Varnam and draws for Daniel McGowan, Nigel Birtwistle, Stephen Prior and Daniel Wells resulted in a 4-4 draw. In their second match Grantham lost narrowly to BCM Dragons I 4½ to 3½.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the RAOB Club, 58 South Park on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk

