

This week's game has been sent to me by Nick Stead against Ray Gamble in the 8-8 draw against Derbyshire as reported last week. Nick is captain of the Grimsby team who as current champions of Division 1 of the Lincolnshire League and is now an established member of the Lincolnshire team in the Minor Counties competition.

We pick up the game after Ray, as black, has just played 23. ...Rhe8 (see diagram) defending the pawn on e6. However, Nick saw a way to win the pawn - can you see it?

Nick played 24. dxe6 fxe6 25. Rd6 Rad8 26. Rxe6 Rxe6 27. Bxe6 winning the pawn but still needed his skill and judgement to press home the advantage 27. ...Rd3 28. Rd1 Rxd1 (not 28. ...Rxe3 29. Rd7+) 29. Nxd1 a6 30. Nc3 Bc6 31. a4 Kd8 32. Kf2 Ke7 33. Bc8 a5 34. h4 h6 35. Ke3 Kd8 36. Bg4 Bf8 37. Bf3 Bd7 and black declined the exchange.

The cat and mouse end-game continued with 38. Be4 Be8 39. Bd5 Be7 40. Ke4 Bf8 41. g4 Be7 42. g5 hxg5 43. hxg5 Kc7 44. Nb5+ Kd8 45. e6 Bf8 46. f5 gxf5+ 47. Kxf5 Bg7 48. Bb7 Ke7 49. Nc7 Bxa4 and black regained the pawn but to no avail and Nick saw a way to finish off his opponent 50. Nd5+ Kd6 51. Kg6 Bd4 52. Kf7 b5 53. Bc6 Bd1 54. e7 and black resigned unable to prevent the pawn promotion.

Lincolnshire now play West Midlands runners up Greater Manchester whilst Leicestershire, who beat Nottinghamshire in their last East Midlands zonal game, play surprise West Midlands winners Worcestershire.

The semi-final winners play for the Midland Counties championship and are guaranteed places in the national stages whilst the losers will play off for the third national stage place.

Grimsby Chess Club play at St.James School common room on Bargate on Mondays and Thursdays.

