

Lincolnshire's team in the Under 120 grade competition played the third match in this season's Midland Counties round robin when they travelled to the neutral venue of Thurmaston Old School near Leicester when Staffordshire were the opponents.

Having drawn with Worcestershire and lost to Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire needed a good result to stay in contention for a top 3 place and qualification for the national stages.

On board 7 Andrew Watson who is the captain of the Horncastle team was paired as white against Arthur Hall from Lichfield with Andrew playing 1. c4 the English opening 1. ...e5 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 Be7 4. Nc3 c6 5. Nf3 d6 6. d3 0-0 7. 0-0 Re8 and both players have castled in a circumspect opening. Andrew continued to advance his pawns with 8. b4 Nbd7 9. a4 d5 10. b5 d4 11. Ne4 Nxe4 12. dxe4 Nf6 and this exchange has left Andrew with doubled e-pawns which black sought to exploit (see diagram) but has left his pawn on e5 unprotected.

Andrew took advantage with 13. Nxe5 Bf8 14. f4 cxb5 15. axb5 Qb6 16. Kh1 Nd7 and was able to consolidate this and now has his sights set on black's pawn on d4 17. Bb2 Bc5 18. Nd3 Nf6 19. Nxc5 Qxc5 20. Qxd4 winning a second pawn 20. ...Qe7 21. e5 Rd8 and black threatens Andrew's queen but he played 22. exf6 Rxd4 23. fxe7 and black resigned as 24. e8(Q) or 24. Bxd4 follows.

Wins also for Behzad Parnian from Grimsby, Peter Damms from Louth and Will Taylor from Grantham plus draws for Chris Cumbers and Philip Gutcher together with 2 defaulted boards by Staffordshire gave Lincolnshire the spoils by 7½ to 4½.

Horncastle Chess Club play at the Bull Hotel in the town centre on Thursdays at 7.30pm.

