

Grantham Sharks 2, Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL (4 Nations Chess League), continued their second week-end in Group B of the second division when White Rose 2 were their opponents. Having won their previous match Grantham were hoping to maintain the momentum.

On board 6 Stephen Prior, who also plays for Grantham in the Notts League, was paired as black against Theo Slade from Barnstaple with the opening following the Sicilian Defence 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. f3 e5 6. Nb3 d5 7. Bg5 Be6 8. Bxf6 gxf6 9. exd5 Qxd5 10. Qxd5 Bxd5 and in an unusual line the queens are exchanged with Stephen having doubled f-pawns 11. Nc3 Bc6 12. 0-0-0 Nd7 13. Na5 Bb4 14. Nxc6 Bxc3 15. bxc3 bxc6 and further changes have left white with doubled c-pawns and an open b-file.

Play continued 16. Rd6 Rc8 17. Ba6 Rc7 18. Rhd1 Ke7 19. Bf1 Nb6 20. R6d3 Rb8 and white retreats both bishop and rook while Stephen exploits the open b-file with his knight poised to find a threatening position 21. g3 Rcb7 22. Bh3 Ke8 23. Kd2 Nc4+ 24. Ke2 and now Stephen is ready to home in on white's king (see diagram).

Stephen played 24. ...Rb2 25. Rd7 Rxc2+ 26. Kd3 Na3 27. Rxa7 Rd8+ 28. Ke4 Rxd1 winning the rook and white resigned a few moves later.

Draws for Daniel McGowan, Nigel Birtwistle, Hugh Murphy, Guy Batchelor and Amisha Parmar was not quite enough as Grantham lost by 3½ to 4½ leaving them in 6<sup>th</sup> place on 3 points and have it all to do in the remaining matches to gain a place in the top four.

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

