

Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL Division 2, Grantham Sharks 2, booked into the Holiday Inn at Birmingham Airport for the third week-end when rounds 5 and 6 were being played. After round 4 Grantham were in 6th place on 3 points so good results were needed as the top four in each group play off for promotion and the bottom four in each group join to form the relegation pool.

Things didn't start so well as in round 5 Grantham lost 5-3 to group leaders Barbican 4NCL Youth and so into round 6 where Grantham met Kings Head from Sussex. On board 4 Grantham's Hugh Murphy was paired as white against Feliks Kwiatkowski and we pick up the game after black has just played 24. ...Bd7 (see diagram) materially equal but with white's rooks better positioned to support an attack. Hugh's next move opened up black's defense - can you see it?

Hugh played 25. Bxg5 with the envisaged follow up of 25. ...fxg5 26. Qxg5 and 27. f6. In fact black played 25. ...Be8 26. Qg4 fxg5 27. f6 Nh7 28. fxg7 Kxg7 regaining the piece. Hugh played 29. Nd1 b5 30. Ne3 bringing the knight into play threatening 31. Nf5+ so black had to play 30. ...B-g6 31. Rf7+ Kh8 (not 31. ... Bxf7 32. Nf5+) 32. Rd7 Qb6 33. a5 and black is forced to play 33. ...Qxa5 34. Qe6 and black resigned as mate follows in a few moves.

A win also for Magdalena Gorol and draws for Rupert Willis, Nigel Birtwistle, Liam Vernam, Daniel McGowan and Stephen Prior meant that Grantham tip toed over the line by 4½ to 3½ and now lie in 5th place with 1 round remaining.

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

