

Lincolnshire's team in the Open/Minor Counties competition played Worcestershire in the final of the Midland Counties group stages. Having beaten Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and drawn with Derbyshire in the East Midlands zone they reached the final by beating Greater Manchester in the semi-final.

With a place in the national stages secure for both teams the prizes for winning were the Midland Counties Open and Minor Championship Trophies.

A tough match was envisaged so captain Nigel Birtwistle had drafted in Matthew Turner, now a grand master who was born in Scunthorpe but lives in Somerset and teaches at Milfield School.

It is Matthew's game that we feature playing black on board 1 against Stephen Mellor from Worcester and we pick up the game after white has just played 19. Be4 (see diagram) seemingly sacrificing the bishop but attacking the knight on d4.

Play duly continued 19. ...fxe4 20. Qxd4 Rg6 21. Rxe4 winning the pawn and now both queens are under attack. However, Matthew now played 21. ...Qg5 threatening 22. ...Qxg2 mate so white played 22. Qd2 Bxc3 23. Rxc3 Bxe4 24. Qxg5 Rxc3 25. fxe4 and after these latest exchanges Matthew is ahead having two rooks against a rook, knight and an extra pawn.

Matthew closed in with 25. ...Rf8 26. Ng3 h5 27. h3 h4 and white resigned as 28. Ne2 Rf2 causes further loss.

Wins also for Stephen Prior and Ivan David from Grantham, John Naylor from Louth and Denis Georgiou from Scunthorpe plus draws for Paul Cumbers, Joe Kilshaw, Nigel Birtwistle, Harry Russell, Nick Payne, Andrew Hebert and Keith Palmer crowned Lincolnshire the winners 9-7.

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)

