

This season's Division 2 North has been a closely fought campaign. At the beginning of December 5 of the 8 teams taking part were level on 3 points. After more twists and turns the position at the end of January 4 of these teams, Grimsby 1875, Louth Skewers, Scunthorpe B and Lincoln had progressed to lead the table on 5 points so it was still all to play for.

Next it was Barton-on-Humber who joined the party also on 5 points and then Grimsby D, languishing on 4 points in 6th place, leap-frogged the field to top the table on 6 points. However, stable-mates Grimsby 1875 were not to be out-done and a win against Scunthorpe A put them ahead on 7 points.

And so to tonight's game when league leaders Grimsby 1875 were the visitors to South Park and on board 3 Lincoln's James Irwin, who has established himself as one of Lincoln's brightest stars, was paired as white against Grimsby's Steve Rimmer with the opening following the King's Indian attack 1. Nf3 c5 2. g3 Nc6 3. Bg2 Nf6 4. b3 d6 5. Bb2 e5 and James's two fianchettoed bishops are countering black's central pawns.

Play continued 6. d3 Be7 7. Nbd2 0-0 8. 0-0 b5 and after both players have castled black advances his b pawn but creates an opportunity for James (see diagram) - can you see it?

James played 9. Nxe5 Nxe5 10. Bxa8 Bh3 11. Bg2 Bxg2 12. Kxg2 winning a pawn and the exchange and went on to win.

Wins for Herman Kok and Qais Karimi plus a draw for yours truly gave Lincoln the win by 3½ to ½ putting us top of the table on points difference.

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

