

Grantham Sharks II, Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL, were in action when they flew into the Holiday Inn at Birmingham Airport. In the first match of the week end they were paired against MK Pheonix I in the last match of Group 2B. Coming into the match they were lying in 5th place needing a win to gain finish in the top four and thus qualify for the promotion pool.

On board 2 Paul Cumbers who also plays for Grantham in the Notts League and Lincolnshire in the Minor Counties was paired as black against Charles Tippleston and we pick up the game after white has just played 31. Ra2 (see diagram) materially equal but with white's queen side pawns being separated.

Paul sought to take advantage with 31. ...R6c4 32. g5 h5 33. a4 Kh7 34. a5 b5 35. Rd2 Rxf4 and white gives up his f-pawn to attack Paul's pawns 36. Rd7 a6 37. Ra7 Rc6 38. c3 Kg6 39. Rd2 Rxh4 40. Rf2 Kxg5 41. Rxf7 and black wins a pawn but not before losing 2 more and is now 2 pawns down 41. ... g6 42. Rfd7 Ra4 43. Rd3 h4 44. Rfxf7 Rxa5 45. Rd6 and white is hoping for 45. ...Rxd6 46. exd6 but Paul instead played 45. ...Ra2+ 46. Kf3 Rxc3+ 47. Ke4 Ra4+ 48. Rd4 and white resigned.

Wins also for Ben Purton, Nigel Birtwistle, Nigel McGowan and Stephen Prior plus a draw for Liam Varnam gave the Sharks the win by 5½ to 2½ finishing in 4th place.

They now go forward to the promotion pool and play the top 4 teams from Group 1A with the top 4 from the pool being promoted.

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

