

Grantham Sharks, Lincolnshire's team in this season's 4NCL competition, played their final week-end of 3 matches in Division 2 at the Hinckley Island Hotel in near Leicester finishing on the May bank-holiday. The penultimate week-end saw them in the promotion pool having finished 4<sup>th</sup> in group 2b where they were joined by the top four teams in group 2a.

A couple of weeks ago we left the Sharks in 6<sup>th</sup> place in the promotion pool needing some good results as only the top four teams gain promotion to Division 1. However, the week-end did not start too well as they went down 6-2 to Sussex Martlets I.

On the Sunday they played against Cambridge University II and on board 1 Rupert Willis, who has been a regular on the 4NCL circuit since 2006, was paired as black against Stuart Robertson and we pick up the game after white has just played 22. b3 (see diagram) materially equal but this last move has set up an opportunity for Rupert - can you see it?

Rupert played 22. ...Nfxd5 sacrificing the knight for a pawn. White duly played 23. exd5 Bxc3 but white realised that he cannot retake the bishop as 24. Qxc3 Nxd5 and 25. ...Ne3+ follows. In fact white played 24. Ne4 Be5 leaving Rupert a pawn to the good and he went on to win.

A win also for Liam Varnam and draws for Graeme Kafka and Stephen James was not quite enough as Cambridge University ran out winners 5-3.

In the final match a weakened Grantham team was soundly beaten 8-0 by Guildford III but it mattered not as Grantham's fate was already sealed as they finished bottom of the promotion pool so remaining in Division 2 for the forthcoming season.

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

