

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition started this season's campaign when they visited Bramcote Village Hall where their neighbours Nottinghamshire were the hosts.

Last season Lincolnshire won both the Midland Counties Open and Minor Counties championships when the format involved East and West zones when they beat Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and drew with Derbyshire in the East Zone before going on to beat West Zone runners-up Greater Manchester in the semi-final and Worcestershire in the final. The season before Nottinghamshire themselves were Midland Counties champions beating Leicestershire in the final.

This season a couple of counties have dropped out of the Minor Counties championship so the format has reverted to an all-play-all involving 5 counties from both East and West with the top 3 counties qualifying for the ECF national stages.

Last year Lincolnshire lost to Essex in the national quarter-finals and the year before Nottinghamshire lost to Suffolk in the national final so this season's encounter could be closely contested.

However, things did not start well for Lincolnshire when their captain Nigel Birtwistle had to withdraw at the last minute due to a family bereavement.

In the match Lincolnshire's only win came on board 15 when Grantham's Ivan David was black and we picked up the game after Ivan had just played 32. ...Kf7 (see diagram) looking to regain parity with 33. ...Kxf6. However, white played 33. Re7+ Bxe7 and then resigned.

There were draws for Nick Stead, Joe Kilshaw, Stuart Williams, Stephen Prior, Harry Russell, Denis Georgiou and Keith Palmer but that was not enough as Nottinghamshire won 11-5.

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

