

Lincolnshire's team in the Under 120 grade competition played their final match in the Midland Counties qualifying competition when they played Warwickshire at St.Hilda's church hall in East Goscote near Leicester. Of the five teams in this section three will qualify for the national stages. Nottinghamshire had already been crowned champions on 8 points but today's combatants with Warwickshire on 4 points and Lincolnshire on 3 occupied 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places and this match would decide the order of the minor places.

On board 11, Philip Gutcher from Grimsby was paired as white against Peter Stiff from Stratford and we pick up the game after black has just played 15. ...Qxe5 (see diagram) and it looks like black has gained a pawn advantage - however Phil found a way to turn the tables - can you see it?

Phil played 16. fxe6 Qxe6 17. Bc4 Qd6 18. Bxf7+ Kd8 winning back the pawn and also ensuring that black's king cannot castle. Phil pressed on with the attack with 19. Qf2 Qf6 20. Qd2+ Qd6 21. Nd5 Bg5 22. Bxg5+ hxg5 23. Qxg5+ Kc8 winning another pawn 24. c4 Nd7 25. Qxg7 Rd8 winning a third pawn 26. Rad1 Bxd5 27. Bxd5 Qe5 28. Qg4 Kc7 29. Rf7 Qe8 30. Qf4+ Kc8 31. Qg4 Kc7 32. Be6 Qxf7 33. Bxf7 and black felt compelled to sacrifice his queen for a rook and Phil went on to win a few moves later.

Wins also for Graeme Rae from Horncastle, Peter Damms & Cameron Marnoch both from Louth together with draws for Andy Pollock, Chris Cumbers and captain William Orr meant that Warwickshire just won by 6½ to 5½ meaning that Lincolnshire play Kent in the National stages.

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

