

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition played their final game of the Midland Counties qualifying competition when they played Worcestershire at the neutral venue of the Syston Social Club north of Leicester. Having lost to Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and beaten Warwickshire they were level on 2 points with today's opponents so this match would decide the third and final qualifying place in the national finals.

On board 5 Lincolnshire's captain Nigel Birtwistle was paired as white against Geoff Marchant from Streatham and we pick the game up after black has just played 28. ...Rfd8 (see diagram) looking to build an attack down the centre with his 2 rooks but this opened up an opportunity for Nigel - can you see it?

Nigel played 29. Bxh6 g6 30. Bg5 Qf7 31. Bxg6 Qxg6 32. Bxe7 R8d7 and the exchange has left him 2 pawns to the good and opened up black's king. Nigel closed in with 33. Rh6 Qxe4 34. Bf6+ Kg8 35. Rh4 Qg6 36. Rg4 Qxg4 37. Qxg4+ and black loses his queen ...Kf8 38. Bxe5 and faced with a surplus of king side pawns black resigned.

Wins also for Chris Dorrington from Grantham, Harry Russell from Louth, Joe Kilshaw from Grimsby and Denis Georgiou from Scunthorpe together with draws for Paul Cumbers, Samuel Milson, Stephen Prior, Keith Palmer, Alastair Summers, Graham Ladds, Andy Hebert and Ivan David was just enough as Lincolnshire won 9-7.

Lincolnshire now play Cornwall in the Preliminary round of the national finals.

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

