

Lincoln's team in Division 1 of the Lincolnshire League played their final match of the season when they visited St. James School in Grimsby. A quirk in the fixtures shows Grimsby playing in the last 3 fixtures of the season against each of the other 3 teams - of which this was the first. Current champions Grimsby were second on 4 points with run-away leaders Louth on 9 points so Grimsby needed to win all three matches to retain the title.

On board 1 Lincoln's Murray Smith was paired as white against Grimsby captain Nick Stead who responded to 1. e4 with the French Defence 1. ...e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. dxc5 d4 and Murray's knight is pinned 6. a3 Ba5 7. b4 dxc3 8. Qg4 and Murray threatens black's pawn on g7 8. ...Ne7 9. bxa5 Nbc6 allowing him to take black's bishop but his pawn structure could be better.

Play continued 10. Nf3 Qd5 11. Bc4 Qxc5 12. Be3 Qxa5 13. Qxg7 Rg8 14. Qxh7 Nxe5 15. Nxe5 Qxe5 16. 0-0-0 Qa5 17. Kb1 Qxa3 and black is now a pawn up and threatening mate (see diagram). However, Murray saw a game winning series of moves - can you see them?

Murray played 18. Bb5+ Bd7 (not 18. ...Kf8 19. Bh6 mate) 19. Bxd7+ Kd8 20. Bxe6+ Kc7 21. Rd7+ and black resigned as mate follows in a couple of moves.

Draws for Neil Roberts and Paul Fischer meant that Grimsby won 3-2. In the remaining matches Grimsby drew with Scunthorpe and the beat Louth 3-2 in the final match. However, this meant that Louth were crowned champions on points difference. Also, Scunthorpe's draw brought them level on points with Lincoln but still finished bottom again on points difference.

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

