

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition were in action when they visited Warwick Castle to play Suffolk in the national final. Lincolnshire were finalists last season when they lost to Norfolk so were hoping to go one better this time around.

On board 1 Lincolnshire's Chris Dorrington who also plays for Grantham in the Nottinghamshire league was paired as black against Alan Merry from Bury St Edmunds and we pick up the game after white has just played 35. Qxe1 (see diagram) following an exchange of rooks - materially equal but Chris has an opportunity to gain an advantage - can you see it?

Chris played 35. ...Bxc5 36. Bxc5 Qd5+ 37. Kg1 Qxc5+ winning the pawn and despite a valiant rear guard action by white Chris went on to win. In fact Chris was the last to finish seeing Lincolnshire over the line in a tense and closely fought final.

Wins for Ivan David and Chris Holt both also from Grantham and Samuel Milson from Louth plus draws for Nick Stead, Stuart Williams, Stephen Prior, Murray Smith, Peter Cusick, Joe Kilshaw and Arya Parnian meant that Lincolnshire won by 8½ points to 7½.

The rules of the Minor Counties competition state that the average grade of the 16 players must not exceed 180. In the final our captain, Nigel Birtwistle, had to leave out a couple higher graded players to stay under the limit. Those who played in the final received winner's medals but the county have also paid for medals for the 8 players who did not play in the final but contributed to the team's success in earlier rounds.

Nigel is considering whether to enter the national Open competition next season where no such restrictions apply.

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

