

Lincolnshire's team in the Under 120 grade section of the Midland Counties qualification stages played their fourth match out of six when they met Staffordshire at the Thurmaston Old School near Leicester - a favourite half way house venue when counties in the East Midlands meet their counterparts in the west.

Lincolnshire were in 4th place coming into the match 2 points ahead of Staffordshire so a good result was hoped for to get into the top three places and qualification for the national stages.

On board 7 Terry Bennett from Spalding was paired as white against Fred Biles from Lichfield and we pick up the game after black has just played 14. ...Rb2 (see diagram) putting his rook in an awkward position.

Terry replied 15. Qd1 Rfb8 16. Bc3 Rb3 17. Bb4 and black's rook is trapped so he played 17. ...a5 18. Qxb3 axb4 but Terry still wins the exchange.

Play continued 19. axb4 Ne4 20. Nc3 Bg4 21. Ra2 Bf6 22. Re1 e5 and black is switching his attack to the centre 23. Nxe4 dxe4 24. Nd2 Bxe2 25. Rxe2 exd4 26. Nxe4 dxe3 27. Rxe3 but the attack comes to nothing with Terry still ahead.

Black tried another tack with 27. ...Bd4 28. Re2 Nxc5 29. Nxc5 Bxc5 thinking that Terry could not take the bishop as 30. bxc5 Rxb3 would follow. However, he overlooked that Terry would then play 31. Re8 mate so the game went 30. bxc5 h6 31. Qc2 leaving Terry a rook to the good and black resigned a few moves later.

Wins for John Grasham, Kiat Huang and Adam Cook from Louth and Paul Fischer from Lincoln plus a draw for Paul Rutter was not quite enough as Staffordshire won 6½ to 5½.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the Lincoln Labour Club, Grafton House, 32 Newland. LN1 1XG on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.
www.lincolnchessclub.co.uk

