

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition were in action when they played in the National Final against Surrey held at Warwick Castle. Lincolnshire were losing finalists two years ago and were crowned champions last season and won all their matches this season and we have to go back to December 2016 with an 11 match unbeaten run since then.

On board 6 Murray Smith from Lincoln was paired as white against Julian Way from Kingston and we pick up the game after black has just played 35. ...Rf7 (see diagram) with Murray already a pawn up and looking at black's pawn on e5. However, he wanted to clear the board of a few major pieces so he played 36. Rd7 Rgg7 37. Rxf7 Rxf7 38. h4 Ne6 39. Qxg6+ Kxg6 40. Bxe5 and Murray is now 2 pawns up.

Play continued 40. ...Rf2 41. c4 Kh5 42. Kg3 Rd2 43. Re3 Kg6 44. Rf3 Nd4 45. Rf6+ Kh7 46. Rxh6+ and another pawn falls as 46. ...Kxh6 47. Bf4+ would follow. Black actually played 46. ...Kg8 47. Bxd4 Rxd4 48. Kf4 Kf7 49. Rh7+ Kf6 50. Rxa7 and black, now four pawns down, resigned.

Wins also for Nick Stead, Joe Kilshaw and Arya Parnian - all from Grimsby - plus draws for Nigel Birtwistle, Samuel Milson, Paul Cumbers, Keith Palmer, Peter Cusick and Chris Holt meant that Surrey ran out winners 9-7.

Nigel has already indicated that he is willing to captain the team next season with a view to regaining the title. I am sure that most, if not all, of the players will support him in this.

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

