

Grantham Sharks 2, Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL, played their second week-end of the season where they played rounds 3 and 4 out of 7 in Pool B of Division 2.

Having won both their matches in the first week-end they were hoping for a couple of good results at the picturesque venue of the Mercure Hotel in Deventry. In the first match they could only draw with Cambridge University 1 but still led the table on 5 points and on the Sunday they were paired against Wessex A and on board 4 captain Nigel Birtwistle was paired as black against William McDougall and we pick up the game after white has just played 32. Bc6 (see diagram) materially equal with both players having a passed pawn on the queen's side.

Nigel played 32. ...Ra5 33. e5 Rca7 34. Rbc1 Rc5 35. Re3 and with Nigel's bishop blocked off it looks like his pawn on c3 is doomed 35. ...g5 36. g3 Ra3 37. Rcxc3 Rxc3 38. Rxc3 gxf4 39. gxf4 dxe5 40. fxe5 Bxe5 winning back the pawn and bringing his bishop back into play 41. Nc2 Ra2 42. Re3 Bd6 43. Rd2 Rb2 44. Nd4 Bc5 and Nigel has pinned the knight to the king so 45. Rxb2 Bxd4+ 46. Rf2 Kg7 47. Kg2 Bxf2 48. Kxf2 meant that parity was maintained.

However, into the end game, and Nigel exploited white's weak pawn structure with 48. ...Kf6 49. Kg3 Ke5 50. Be8 f5 51. Bf7 Nxd5 52. Bxd5 Kxd5 winning a pawn and went on to win a few moves later.

Wins also for Rajat Makkar from Reading, Samuel Milson from Louth and Hugh Murphy from Rushden plus draws for Rupert Willis, Graeme Kafka and Aditya Munshi gave Grantham the spoils by 5½ to 2½.

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

