

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition played Norfolk in the national semi-finals at the neutral venue of the New England chess club in Peterborough. Last season Lincolnshire lost in the final to Surrey having beaten Norfolk in the quarter-final along the way.

However, Norfolk are always difficult opponents and in a tense match the tie stood at 8-7 to Norfolk with one match outstanding - today's match - on board 1 where Chris Dorrington from Bourne was paired as black against Michael Harris from Bury St.Edmunds and we pick up the game after white has just played 31. Ra1 (see diagram) materially equal but with Chris needing to win to draw the match.

Chris played on making the most of his two linked queen side pawns 31. ...c4 32. Bf1 b4 33. Qc2 c3 and white's queen was forced to retreat allowing Chris to bypass the pawn on d3 34. bxc3 Rxc3 35. Qb1 f5 36. Ra7 Ra3 37. Rxa3 bxa3 and Chris's passed pawn is on the a-file 38. Bc1 Qc6 39. f3 fxe4 40. dxe4 a2 41. Qxa2 Qxc1 gaining a piece for the pawn and went on to win a few moves later.

Wins for Stephen Prior and Stuart Williams from Grantham and Joe Kilshaw from Grimsby plus draws for Nigel Birtwistle, Samuel Milson, Nick Stead, Paul Cumbers, Peter Cusick, Francis Bowers, Andrew Hebert and Chris Holt left the match at 8-8.

The result was decided on board count where the board numbers of the winning players were added together with the lower number winning. Lincolnshire won on boards 1, 7, 8 and 10 with Norfolk winning on boards 6, 11, 13 and 16 so Lincolnshire won 26 to 46.

Devon, the other semi-final winners were unable to field a team in the final so Lincolnshire were crowned champions.

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

