

Lincolnshire's team in the U1825 grade section on the Online County Championships were in action when they were paired against Norfolk in the second round of matches. Having had an emphatic win against Leicestershire in round 1 Lincolnshire were in confident mood.

However, the initial games did not go to plan and at one stage Leicestershire led by 5.5 to 2.5 needing a further point to win the match. The tide began to turn and win one match outstanding the match was tied at 5.5 all thanks to wins for Herman Kok and Martin Pettinger plus draws for Rod Wardlaw, John Grasham, Neil Milson, Tim Smith and yours truly.

The last match was on board 3 where Ben Mason from Grantham was paired as white against Andrew Bayliss and we pick up the game after black has just played 44. ...Bxh5 (see diagram) winning back the pawn lost earlier to bring the game level on material but with both players having passed pawns.

Unlike a normal county match where all the games are in the same room, in online chess players cannot see other games or, indeed, the state of the match (perhaps just as well) and with time pressure starting to mount play continued 45. Ne5+ Ke8 46. c4 Bd1 47. c5 g4 48. Bxh6 g3 and Ben wins a pawn but the g-pawn is getting close to promotion 49. d6 Ba5 50. Be3 Ba4 51. c6 Bb6+ 52. Ke4 Bxc6+ 53. Nxc6 Bxe3 54. Kxe3 Kd7 55. Nb8+ Kxd6 56. Nxa6 g2 57. Kf2 g1(Q)+ 58. Kxg1 Kc6.

But now Ben need to protect the pawn on a3 to avoid a draw 59. Nb4 Kb5 60. Kf2 Ka4 61. Nc2 and Ben was able to shepherd in the pawn a few moves later to give Lincolnshire the win.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the Lincoln Labour Club, Grafton House, 32 Newland. LN1 1XJ on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. Although we are yet to meet due to the lockdown www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk

