

Always ready to try out new formats the county organisers have brought in the Friday Night Club this being a blitz competition over 5 rounds with 5 minutes on the clock and a 2 second increment after every move. The shorter format proved popular with the players as a field of 12 took centre stage in an interesting competition.

It was nip and tuck in the early stages and at the end of round 4 there was a four way tie for first place on 3 points between Samuel Milson, Nigel Birtwistle, Kevin McCarthy and Stuart MacDonald.

Kevin and Samuel were paired against each other in the final round with the opening, with Kevin as white, eventually following the French Defence 1. d4 d5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. e4 e6 4. Bg5 Be7 5. e5 Nfd7 6. h4 a6 and Samuel is not tempted to exchange the bishops on g5 7. Qg4 f5 8. Qg3 declining the en passant option as play continued 8. ...c5 9. dxc5 Nc6 10. 0-0-0 Nxc5 and Samuel retakes the pawn after Kevin had castled queen side 11. Nf3 b5 12. Bxe7 Qxe7 13. h5 and now Samuel saw an opportunity to gain an advantage (see diagram) can you see it?

Samuel played 13. ...b4 14. Ne2 forcing Kevin to relinquish control of the e4 square and played 14. ...Ne4 15. Qh4 Qxh4 16. Rxh4 Nxf2 winning the pawn and despite stubborn resistance by Kevin Samuel went on to win a few moves later.

Nigel defeated Stuart in the last round meaning that Samuel and Nigel shared first place on 4 points with Kevin and Stuart sharing 3rd place on 3 points. Tim Smith from Grimsby, also finishing on 3 points, was the best placed player with a rating of less than 1600.

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

