

The Lincolnshire County Championship took place recently, the first time since 2019 due to the pandemic so it was another opportunity for county players to return to over-the-board chess.

In the Open section there were only 10 entries, disappointing but understandable, but enough for a competitive tournament. This was a 5 round event spread over 2 days with each round starting with 1 hour 20 on the clock plus a 10 second increment added for each move made.

Coming into the last round Lincoln's Murray Smith, who was joint winner three years ago, led the field on 3.5 points and he was paired as white against Ray Ilett from Peterborough who lay in equal third place on 2.5 points with the opening following the Scandinavian Defence 1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Nf6 3. d4 Nxd5 4. Nf3 g6 5. c4 Nb6 and black is forced to retreat his knight 6. h3 Bg7 7. Be3 0-0 and Ray has castled but Murray controls the centre.

Play continued 8. Nc3 Nc6 9. Be2 f5 and black advances his f pawn but opened up the king 10. d5 Na5 11. Bd4 Bxd4 12. Qxd4 e5 13. Qc5 e4 14. Nd4 and now Murray has complete control of the centre with black's knight on a5 in danger.

Ray played 14. ...Nbxc4 15. Bxc4 sacrificing a knight for a pawn 15. ...b6 16. Qb5 c5 (see diagram) Murray took the pawn on c5 using the en-passant move 17. dxc6+ which gives discovered check with the bishop on c4. Ray played 17. ...Kh8 but then resigned as Murray is now a piece up.

Murray therefore retained the trophy on 4.5 points with Paul Hutchinson from Scarborough coming second on 3.5. Joe Kilshaw and Daniel Wells shared third place on 3 with Francis Bowers taking the U1900 grading prize on 2.5.

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

