

Lincolnshire's team in the Under 120 grade competition played their last match in this season's campaign against Warwickshire at the picturesque Thurmaston Old School near Leicester. Having lost all of their previous matches Lincolnshire wanted a good showing to round off their first season in this competition.

On board 5 Louth's Francis Birkbeck was paired as white against John Donovan from Shirley Chess Club with the opening following Alekhine's Defence 1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Nf6 3. Nc3 Nxd5 4. Bc4 e6 5. d4 Be7 6. Nf3 a6 7. Ne5 b5 8. Qf3 and Francis disregards the attack on his bishop while threatening 9. Qxf7 mate (see diagram). Black played 8. 0-0 but Francis won the pawn with 9. Nxd5 exd5 10. Bxd5 and now threatened 11. Nxf7+ as well as 11. Bxa8.

Black elected to play 10. ...Bf6 11. Bxa8 Qxd4 and Francis still had to be careful as his king is exposed in the centre 12. Nc6 Nxc6 13. Bxc6 Bg4 14. Qd3 Qb4+ 15. c3 Qe7+ 16. Be3 Rd8 17. Qe4 Qxe4 18. Bxe4 and with the queens off the board Francis is in a good position 18. ...Re8 19. Bc6 Re6 20. Bd7 Re4 21. Bxe4 Rxe4 22. 0-0 and with Francis a rook to the good black resigned.

Wins also for Mark Bradshaw, Ian Scott, Charles Moss, John Grasham and James Kelly together with draws for Will Grummitt and Tom Claxton gave Lincolnshire a 7-5 win. Captain John Grasham has put together a good squad of young players who will, hopefully, fair better next season.

Louth Chess Club play at Church House, Upgate, Louth next to St. James Church every Tuesday at 7.30pm.

