

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition were in action again. They qualified for the national quarterfinals by finishing second to Leicestershire in the Midland Counties group stages when a strong Essex team were their opponents. Lincolnshire have fielded a strong team in recent years having been losing semi-finalists in the last two seasons so a close encounter was in prospect.

On board 7 Samuel Milson from Louth was paired as white against John White with the opening following the Ruy Lopez 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 b5 6. Bb3 Be7 7. Re1 d6 8. h3 0-0 9. c3 Na5 10. Bc2 c5 11. d4 Qc7 12. d5 Nc4 13. b3 Nb6 forcing black to retreat and opening up avenues for the bishop on c1 14. Nbd2 Bd7 15. Nf1 c4 16. b4 a5 17. Ba3 Ra7 18. bxa5 Rxa5 19. Bb4 Ra7 and Samuel had maneuvered his bishop from c1 to b4 setting up his next move which won a pawn (see diagram) - can you see it?

Samuel played 20. Nxe5 (20. ...dxe5 21. Bxe7). Black actually played 20. ...Rfa8 but Samuel took advantage with 21. a3 Be8 22. Nf3 Rd8 23. Ne3 g6 24. Nd4 Bf8 25. f4 Bg7 26. Qf3 Raa8 27. e5 dxe5 28. d6 Rxd6 29. Bxd6 Qxd6 30. fxe5 Qxe5 31. Nxc4 Qc5 32. Nxb6 Rb8 33. Na8 leaving him a rook to the good and went on to win.

Wins also for Joe Kilshaw from Grimsby and Ivan David from Grantham together with draws for Andrew Dyce, Claudio Mangione, Nick Stead, Nigel Birtwistle, David Coates, Daniel Wells, Steven Prior and Harry Russell was not quite enough as Essex narrowly won 8½ to 7½.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the RAOB Club, 58 South Park on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. [www.lincolncchessclub.co.uk](http://www.lincolncchessclub.co.uk)

