

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition started their new campaign with a match against Worcestershire at the neutral venue of Sharnford Village Hall in Leicestershire in the first of the Midland Counties round robin matches. In recent years Lincolnshire have fielded a strong team and have progressed to the national stages reaching the national semi-finals two years ago and narrowly losing to Essex in the national quarter finals last year.

Captain Nigel Birtwistle, who lives in Boston but plays for Grantham in the Notts League, is hoping for similar fortunes this season and it is his game that is featured this week when he was paired as white on board 9 against Worcestershire's John Knee and we pick up the game after Nigel has just played 29. Rc5 (see diagram) putting pressure on black's pawn on d5. Black responded with 29. ...Rd8 but has set up a game winning combination can you see it?

Nigel played 30. Rxc6 Bxc6 31. Qe7+ sacrificing the exchange but winning the rook in return 31. ...Kh6 32. Qxd8. However, black still had some counterplay 32. ...Qb1+ 33. Kh2 Qxb3 retaking a bishop 34. Qf8+ Kh5 35. Qxf6 but resigned unable to prevent mate in a couple of moves.

Wins also for Andrew Dyce, Nick Stead, Joe Kilshaw and Stuart MacDonald all from Grimsby, David Coates from Lincoln, Keith Palmer from Louth, Ivan David from Grantham, Denis Georgiou from Scunthorpe and Graham Ladds from Newark together with draws for Claudio Mangione, Samuel Milson, Harry Russell and Geoff Collyer gave Lincolnshire a comprehensive 12½ to 3½ victory.

A Merry Christmas to all from Lincoln Chess Club who play at the RAOB Club, 58 South Park on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.
www.lincolnchessclub.co.uk

