

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition played their third match in the Midland Counties group stage when they met Warwickshire at the neutral venue of the Syston Social Club north of Leicester. Having lost to both Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire a win in this match was vital to keep any hopes alive of qualifying for the national stages as only three team will go forward from the 5 team group.

On board 4 Lincolnshire captain Nigel Birtwistle, who also plays for Grantham in the Nottinghamshire League, was paired as white against Tom Robinson from Redditch and we pick up the game after black has just played 24. ...Nc6 (see diagram) materially equal but Nigel's next move opens the way to win a pawn - can you see it?

Nigel played 25. Rd7 Rb8 26. b4 e6 27. Bxc6 bxc6 28. Rxa7 winning the pawn. Nigel still had work to do and play continued 28. ...Rb6 29. Kf1 g5 30. Ke2 Kg6 31. Kd3 f5 32. Kc4 and Nigel can now move the passed a-pawn 32. ...f4 33. exf4 gxf4 34. a4 f3 35. Kc5 Rb8 36. Rd7 e5 37. a5 Rb5+ 38. Kc4 e4 and Nigel needs to be careful of black's counterplay 39. Re7 Kf5 40. a6 Rb6 41. a7 Ra6 42. Kd4 Ra4 43. Re5+ Kf6 44. Ra5 and black resigned.

Wins also for Nick Stead, Paul Cumbers, Samuel Milson, Joe Kilshaw, Denis Georgiou, Alastair Summers, Graham Ladds, Ivan David and Grenville Wollerton plus draws for Stuart Williams, Stephen Prior, Peter Cusick and Chris Holt gave Lincolnshire a comprehensive 12-4 victory.

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)

