

The latest U1600 competition, a regular now on Wednesday evenings, had a change in format. Instead of six rounds of 10 minutes for each game the organisers wanted to try out a new idea of having 5 rounds with each game starting on 10 minutes, as before, but adding 5 seconds for each move made.

Not sure if this put people off but only 11 players entered and so the number of rounds was reduced to 4. However, an exciting event ensued and after round 3 Robert Arthurton from Skegness led the field on a maximum 3 points with Jai Binkhe from Scunthorpe, Herman Kok and yours truly sharing second place on 2 points.

In the final round Robert and Jai went head-to-head with Jai, as black, responding to 1. d4 with the English Defence 1. ...b6 2. c4 Bb7 3. Nc3 d6 4. e4 Nd7 which surrenders control of the centre to whites pawns 5. Bd3 e6 6. Nge2 Ne7 7. 0-0 h6 8. a3 a6 9. Be3 g6 10. b3 Bg7 and white has consolidated his position but black has two powerful bishops.

Play continued 11. Bc2 e5 12. d5 g5 13. Ng3 Nf6 14. Nh5 Nxe5 15. Qxh5 Ng6 16. Na2 Bc8 17. Nb4 Bd7 18. a4 Qc8 19. Bd1 Nf8 20. Be2 Nh7 21. g3 (see diagram) and black has manoeuvred his pieces and now has an opportunity to gain an advantage - can you see it?

Jai played 21. ...Nf6 22. Qf3 Bg4 23. Qg2 Bxe2 winning the piece and he went on to win a few moves later.

Both Herman and myself won our final games meaning that there was a four way tie on 3 points.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the Lincoln Labour Club, Grafton House, 32 Newland. LN1 1XJ on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. Now open after lockdown. www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk

