

Grantham Chess Club once again had need to call on my services. Having helped their second string to win the Notts League Division 3 last season they asked me to play in their first match in Division 2 against Gambits II at the Federation House Social Club on Claremont Street in Nottingham.

With last years captain Chris Cumbers unavailable due to family commitments it was Grantham secretary Chris Holt who took over the reins and I was paired as white on board 3 against Dragoljub Sudar and we pick up the game after I have just played 58. Rb7 in a long a tense affair (see diagram) hoping for 58. ...Rxb7 59. axb7 more in desperation than anything else as Dragoljub's passed pawns on e4 and f4 backed up by his bishop looked quite a threat. However, he played 58. ...Ba7 providing me with an opportunity to salvage the position can you see it?

I played 59. Rxc7 Kxc7 60. Nd5+ Kc5 61. Nxf4 winning the pawn, followed by 61. ...Kb6 62. Nd5+ Kxa6 63. Nf6 h6 (choosing to keep the h-pawn) 64. Nxe4. Now it was a race to the line 64. ...Ka5 65. Kg2 Kxa5 66. h3 Be3 67. Kf3 Bc1 68. Kg4 Kb5 69. Kh5 Kc6 70. Nf6 Kd6 71. Ng4 Ke6 72. Nxe6 Bxe6 73. Kxe6 Kf6 74. h4 Kf7 and a draw was agreed.

Unfortunately, only Chris Holt and Ben Mason were able to achieve draws meaning that Gambits took the tie 3½ to 1½ so it looks like it is going to be a tough campaign for the gingerbreads.

