

Pandora's Box Grantham, Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL, were in action in this season's penultimate week-end at the plush De Vere's Venue at Staverton Park. Playing in Group A in Division 1 they were finding life a bit tough having failed to gain a single point in the previous 6 matches. They fared little better in their final match in the group losing by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  points to  $\frac{1}{2}$  to Wood Green Hilsmark II.

Thus they went forward with the three teams above them into the Demotion Pool where they play the four bottom teams from Group B the first of which was against Cambridge University I and on board 7 Lincoln's Kevin McCarthy was paired as black against Charles Pickard and we pick up the game after white has just played 20. Nxe5 taking the pawn (see diagram) followed by 20. ...Nxe5 21. Nxb6 sacrificing a knight for two pawns.

Play continued 21. ...Qc7 22. a5 Ned7 23. Bf4 Ne5 and Kevin has to return the knight to e5 to block the pin 24. Nd5 Bxd5 25. cxd5 Qe7 26. Bxe5 Qxe5 27. f4 Qe7 28. d6 and now Kevin has to be on his mettle to stop whites pawn advance.

Kevin replied 28. ...Qa7+ 29. Kh2 c5 30. Rc4 Nd7 31. e5 Rxb4 32. Rxb4 cxb4 regaining one of the pawns 33. Rc1 Bxe5 34. fxe5 Nxe5 and Kevin sacrificed his bishop for two pawns to regain parity and a draw was agreed a few moves later.

Draws also for Nigel Birtwistle, Samuel Milson and sister Amy Milson was not enough as Cambridge won by 6 points to 2 putting Pandora bottom of the Demotion Pool with the bottom 4 dropping into Division 2.

