

Lincoln's team in Division 1 played what turned out to be the championship decider when they visited St.James School in Grimsby. The hosts led the table with 7 points with this match being their last of the season. Lincoln were 1 point behind with 3 matches left including this one so a win for Grimsby to prevent Lincoln from securing their third successive title.

On board 1 Lincoln's Paul Cumbers was paired as white against Grimsby captain Nick Stead and we pick up the game after Nick has just played 25. ...Nd3+ forcing an exchange, clearly looking to gain control of the third rank hoping to regain Paul's pawn advantage (see diagram).

Play duly continued 26. Bxd3 Rxd3 27. Nxc6 Bxc6 and now the b-file is open for Paul to mount an attack with his own rooks 28. Rb4 Rgd8 29. Rcb1 Rd2+ 30. Kg3 R8d3 31. Rb8+ Kd7 32. R1b7+ Ke6. Paul could have played 33. Rxa7 protecting the pawn on a3 but instead he pursued a continuation which led to a neat finish 33. Re8+ Kf6 34. Ree7 Rxa3 35. Rxe7+ Kg6 36. Rg7+ Kf6 37. g5+ Ke6 38. Rbe6 mate.

Wins for David Coates and Geoff Collyer together with draws for Claudio Mangione and yours truly gave Lincoln a comprehensive 4-1 victory.

Meanwhile, Grimsby did have some success this season as their D-team in Division 2 North took the title. Having won their first 5 matches they were unable to complete a clean sweep as they drew with last season's champions Louth in their last match lifting Louth off the bottom of the table consigning newcomers Barton-on-Humber to the wooden spoon.

