

Pandora's Box, Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL played their final set of 3 matches in this season's competition. Playing in Division 1 they had thus far lost all their group matches and had also lost their opening match in the demotion pool needing a complete reversal of fortunes to avoid relegation.

In their first match of the week-end they drew 4-4 with Oxford I thanks to win's for Jerzy Slaby, Paul Cumbers and Daniel Wells but any hope of a miracle escape were dashed when, in their second match, they went down 6½ to 1½ against Barbican 4NCL II.

So, playing for pride, they came into their final match against Sambuca Sharks and on board 4 Lincoln's Sicilian import Claudio Mangione was paired as black against Graeme Kafka and we pick up the game after white has just played 24. b5 (see diagram).

Claudio replied with 24. ...Qb6+ 25. Kh1 Qc5 putting pressure on the knight on a3 26. c4 Ne3 27. Rfe1 d4 28. Rxe3 dxe3 and white has to sacrifice the exchange to stop Claudio's menacing knight 29. Bb3 a4 30. Bd1 Qxa3 and now Claudio also wins the piece and went on to win a few moves later.

Wins also for Paul Cumbers and Martin Burrows together with draws for Jerzy Slaby, Samuel Milson, Daniel Wells, Kevin McCarthy and Amy Milson gave Pandora the spoils with a 5½ to 2½ win meaning that they finished in 6th place on 3 points - 4th place was needed to stay in Division 1 - but, if truth were known, they will probably find their level in Division 2 next season.

