

The annual Louth Rapidplay took place recently at St.James Church House where 24 of the counties best were playing for the Alf Newman Memorial Shield named after the Louth Chess Club chairman who passed away a few years ago.

In the 6 round swiss tournament the key round came in round 5 between Harry Russell from Louth, who led the field with a maximum 4 points, and Lincoln's Kevin McCarthy lying in joint second place on 3½ and we pick up the game Kevin, as black, has just played 20. ...Qe7 (see diagram) with honours even but Harry having more attacking options with the semi-open f-file.

Play continued 21. Nc4 Ba6 22. Ne3 Bxd3 23. cxd3 and after this exchange Harry's knight is looking at the f5 square. Kevin replied with 23. ...g6 24. Rf1 Kg7 25. Qg3 h5. Unfortunately, Kevin overlooked that 26. Nf5+ pinned king and queen and he resigned.

In the last round Harry, guaranteed at least a share of the first place prize money of £70, beat Nick Louth, also from Louth, to take the title for the first time by winning all his matches.

Lincoln's Ayman Hammam, winner in the previous two years, came second on 5 points, winning £25, losing only to Harry in round 3. Lincoln's Paul Cumbers and Nigel Birtwistle from Grantham shared third place on 4 points each winning £20.

Lincoln's Dave Bull had a good afternoon winning all three games to also finish on 4 points winning the £20 under 160 grading prize and Mike Liddle from Scunthorpe took the Under 120 grading prize finishing on 3½ points.

