

Pandora's Box Grantham started their new season recently. Having been relegated from Division 1 of the 4NCL (4 Nations Chess League) last season they were paired in Division 2A against Bradford DCA Knights A. The 16 teams are initially split into 2 groups A and B in an all-play-all format with an end of season playoffs for promotion and relegation - but more of that later.

On board 6 Pandora's captain Nigel Birtwistle was paired as black against Louis Brijmohun with the moves immediately deviating from the book after 1. e4 c5 2. Na3 - Nigel continued with the Sicilian Dragon 2. ...g6 3. f4 Bg7 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. d3 d6 6. c3 Nf6 7. g3 0-0 8. Bg2 Rb8 and white continued to make it up as he went along while Nigel prepared a queenside pawn advance 9. Qe2 b5 10. Nc2 a5 11. d4 cxd4 12. cxd4 b4 13. d5 Na7 14. Be3 Ra8 15. Nfd4 Bb7 16. f5 Nd7 17. fxg6 hxg6 18. h4 Qc8 19. h5 Ba6 20. Qg4 Ne5 21. Qxc8 Rfxc8 22. h6 Bf6 23. a3 and it looked like white's pawns on d5 and h6 were giving him the basis for a strong attack (see diagram). However, his last move of 23. a3 gave Nigel an opportunity to gain material - can you see it?

Nigel played 23. ...b3 and with white's knight on c2 trapped he resigned.

Wins also for Colin Crouch, Richard Polaczek, Marcos Capuzzo and Paul Cumbers together with draws for Jerzy Slaby, Chris Ross and Sue Maroroa gave Pandora a comprehensive win by 6½ to 1½.

Nigel has put together a strong team for this season's campaign - follow them on the Grantham Chess Club web-site [granthamchessclub.blogspot.com](http://granthamchessclub.blogspot.com)

