

Lincoln's team in Division 2 South were host to reigning champions Grantham recently. In fact Grantham have topped the table in the last two seasons so a tense tussle was in prospect. In this season's campaign so far Lincoln led the pack with 4 points from 3 matches with Grantham in third place on 2 points so the visitors needed a win to stay in touch whereas a win for Lincoln would give a 3 point lead over second place Spalding.

On board 3 Lincoln's Herman Kok was paired as white against Grantham's Chris Cumbers with the opening following the Colle system 1. d4 Nf6 2. e3 d5 3. Bd3 e6 4. Nf3 Be7 5. Nbd2 Nbd7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. Re1 Re8 8. c3 c6 a quiet opening with both players securing their defenses.

Herman broke the deadlock with 9. e4 dxe4 10. Nxe4 Nxe4 11. Bxe4 Nf6 12. Bc2 b6 13. Qd3 g6 and now he took advantage of black's weakened pawn structure 14. Ne5 Bb7 15. Bb3 Bf8 16. Bg5 Bg7 17. Ng4 h6 18. Nxe6 Bxe6 19. Bxe6 winning the pawn.

Chris played 19. ...Ng4 threatening the bishop (see diagram) setting up an interesting position. Herman played 20. Qh3 Nxe6 21. Qxe6 and his pawn advantage was enough to secure the win. Post match analysis showed a better alternative to 20. Qh3 can you see it?

Had Herman played 20. Rxe6 then if black plays 20. ...fxe6 then 21. Qxe6 follows. Equally, 20. ...Rxe6 if followed by 21. Bxe6 fxe6 22. Qxe6 Kh8 23. Qg7 mate or if black plays 22. ...Kh7 then 23. Bxe6 Kxe6 gains an extra pawn.

A win for Geoff Collyer and a draw for Dave Bull meant that Lincoln had a narrow win by 2½ to 1½.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the RAOB Club, 58 South Park on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk

