

This season's campaign got underway when Lincoln's team in Division 2 South made the long journey to the Services Social Club in Spalding. As reigning champions Lincoln wanted a good start to the defense of the title but with a couple of the top players missing there was an opportunity for our reserves to make their mark.

Russell Ludlow has returned to the club after finishing his studies at York University where he was also a regular in the University chess team where he gained valuable experience. He demonstrated his improvement over the last couple of years when he won the Quilter Trophy at the Lincolnshire County championships in the summer.

In this match he was paired on board 2 as white against Spalding secretary David Carew, no mean performer, and we pick up the game after David has just played 27. ...Rdc8 (see diagram) threatening Russell's pawn on c2 with the bishop on f4 making life difficult.

To add to the pressure, Russell's game was the last to finish and with Spalding leading 2-1, including draws for Geoff Collyer and yours truly, he needed to win to draw the match.

Russell played 28. h5 Rxc2 29. hxg6 giving Russell a valuable passed pawn 29. ...Rxe2+ 30. Nxe2 Bg5 31. Rf1 Rg8 32. Rf7+ Kb6 33. g7 Bh4 and now Russell needed support the knight whilst avoiding black's bishop 34. Ng1 Bg5 35. Nf3 Bf4 36. Kh3 however black played 36. ...h5 37. gxh5 Bh6 threatening 38. ...Rxg7 but Russell played 38. Rf6+ winning the bishop and black resigned drawing the match and establishing himself as a regular in the team.

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

