

Lincoln's team in Division 2 South continued on this season's campaign. As reigning champions they were hoping for a better start to the season but 2 points from their first three matches saw them bottom of the table whereas tonight's visitors to South Park, Spalding, were in second place on 5 points a point behind Grantham but with a game in hand.

On board 3 it was my pleasure to be paired as white against Jamie Smith, a familiar adversary as we had met a few times recently with a draw the most common outcome. In this encounter the moves initially followed the Sicilian Dragon 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 g6 6. Be2 Bg7 7. Be3 0-0 8. Qd2 Nc6 9. 0-0-0 d5 but in a deviation from the classic line Jamie advanced his d pawn 10. exd5 Nxd5 11. Nxd5 Qxd5 12. Nxc6 Qxd2+ 13. Rxd2 bxc6 14. Bf3 Rb8 15. c3 Be6 (see diagram).

I now played 16. Bxc6 Bxa2 preferring to take the pawn on c6 in order to stop black playing Ra8 17. Bxa7 Rbc8 and now I was a pawn up 18. Bf3 Bh6 19. Be3 Bxe3 20. fxe3 Bb3 but black's bishop on b3 was making life a bit tricky 21. Rd4 Rfd8 22. Rb4. I was expecting 22. ...Rb8 but instead black played 22. ...Ra8 23. Bxa8 Rxa8 24. Kd2 and black resigned.

A win for Russell Ludlow and a draw for John Box who was making a brief return from York University where he is doing a PhD meant that Lincoln scraped a narrow 2½ to 1½ victory.

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

