

In the Nottinghamshire League there is an annual competition for the season's best game. This is judged by the Notts League secretary Steve Burke who is also the county treasurer and secretary of Ashfield Chess Club. 36 In last year's competition there were 5 contenders and the winner was David Coates who was playing for Newark against David Williams from Long Eaton in the game that appeared in this column last year.

David also plays for Lincoln in the Lincolnshire League, as does Claudio Mangione who also plays for Grantham in the Notts League and his game against Jim Burnett of Mansfield was one of those short listed and is the feature of this week's column.

We pick up the game after Jim, as white, has just played 21. Rf2 (see diagram) in a complex middle game. Claudio replied with 21. ...Qb4 forcing white to play 22. Qxb4 cxb4 giving Claudio a two-to-one pawn advantage down the flank.

Claudio continued setting up a position to exploit this with 23. Nb3 Nb7 24. h3 Na4 25. Ba1 Nbc5 26. Nxc5 Nxc5 27. Rd1 a5 28. Ng4 Bg7 29. fxe5 fxe5 30. Rdf1 Bxg4 31. hxg4 Bh6 and Claudio is threatening 32. ...Be3 so white is forced to trade off the rooks with 32. Rxf8+ Rxf8 33. Rxf8+ Kxf8 34. Bf3 a4 35. Kg2 Bc1 and white resigned as Claudio can now play 36. Bd1 b3 37. axb3 axb3 followed by 38. ...b2.

In this season's competition was judged by Andrew Walker from Nottingham University and it was Steve Burke himself who took the plaudits. Sadly, no Lincolnshire players were in the short list.

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

