

James Irwin has sent me this week's game comes from the 40<sup>th</sup> Nottingham Congress played at Nottingham High School where he was one of the 54 entrants in the Major section. This was for players graded 135 to 165 so James's grade of 139 put him well down the pecking order. Consequently, in round 1 James was paired as white against Matthew Wilson from Newton Abbot in Devon who had a grade of 157. However, James is a vastly improved player becoming a key member of all three of the Lincoln teams and is the captain of Lincoln's team in Division 2 South which narrowly missed out on this season's title.

We pick this game up after black has just played 26. ...Qc7 (from c6 avoiding an exchange of queens) but this has provided James with an opportunity to gain material - can you see it?

James played 27. Nxe6 fxe6 28. Qxe6+ Kh8 29. Qxg4 leaving him a couple of pawns to the good. Play continued 29. ...Qe5 30. Nd5 Qd6 31. Nf4 Qf6 32. Qe2 Bd6 33. Nd5 Qe6 34. Rd2 Bb8 35. Rcd1 h6 36. Nf4 Rxd2 37. Qxd2 Bxf4 38. exf4 and James maintained his advantage after a couple of exchanges 38. ...Re8 39. Qd3 Qg4 40. Kg2 Qe2 41. Qxe2 Rxe2 and now the queens are exchanged. Despite a lengthy rear-guard action by black James went on to win.

James also had a good win in round 4 against another higher graded player in Neil Jones of Cockermouth (graded 156) and a draw in round 2 against Vincent Naan from the local Nottingham Gambit club (graded 163) giving him a satisfying 2½ points out of 5 for his week-ends work.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the RAOB Club, 58 South Park on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. [www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk](http://www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk)

