

Lincolnshire's team in the Open/Minor section of the Midland Counties Chess Union qualifiers began this season's campaign with a visit to pleasant surroundings of the Old School in Thurmaston just north of Leicester where Leicestershire were the hosts. Last season Lincolnshire qualified in second place to go forward to the national stages electing to enter the Minor counties section which they duly won narrowly beating Suffolk in the final held at Warwick castle.

On board 6 Stephen Prior from Grantham was paired as white against John Denton from Melton Mowbray and we pick up the game after black has just played 27. ...Qc8 (see diagram). Stephen saw an opportunity to gain an advantage - can you see it?

Stephen played 28. Qa3 attacking the pawn on a7 which black duly covered with 28. ...Qb8 but this set up 29. Bxe5+ winning the pawn as 29. ...dxe5 30. Qxe7+ would follow. As it happens black responded with 29. ...Kf7 30. Bb2 Qf8 31. Qf3+ Ke8 32. Qxf8+ Kxf8 and with the queens off the board Stephen went on to win despite a lengthy rear-guard action from black.

Wins also for Chris Dorrington, Jason Dilley, Stuart Williams and Ivan David who all also play for Grantham in the Nottinghamshire League Division 1 plus draws for Nigel Birtwistle, Samuel Milson, Paul Cumbers, Keith Palmer, Denis Georgiou, Francis Bowers, Chris Holt, Andy Hebert and Arya Parnian meant that Lincolnshire had a comfortable victory by 9½ to 6½.

Captain Nigel Birtwistle was particularly pleased as this is the first time that Lincolnshire have beaten Leicestershire on their home soil.

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

