

Lincolnshire's team in the Under 120 grade competition played their first match in this season's MCCU qualifying competition when they played hosts to Leicestershire at the Atrium on the second floor of the main building at the Lindum Business Park in North Hykeham.

On board 10 John Pocock from Grantham was paired as black against Stuart Hollingworth from Syston with the opening following the Benoni system 1. d4 c5 2. d5 Nf6 3. c4 d6 4. e3 g6 5. b3 Bg7 6. Bb2 0-0 and John has secured his defence by castling although white has control of the centre 7. Be2 e6 8. Nf3 exd5 9. cxd5 a6 and white now has an isolated pawn on d5 which John tries to exploit 10. 0-0 b5 11. Qd3 Re8 12. Nfd2 Bf5 13. Qc3 white's queens only escape Nh5 14. Qc1 Bxb2 15. Qxb2 Nf6 16. Bf3 Re5 17. Nc3 b4 and John applies more pressure on the d4 pawn.

Play continued 18. Ne2 Nbd7 19. Nc4 Re7 20. Nxd6 but John himself loses a pawn Bg4 21. Bxg4 Nxd4 22. h3 Qc7 23. hxg4 Qxd6 preferring to exchange knights 24. Rfd1 Re4 25. Nf4 Nf6 26. g5 Ng4 27. Ra1 Rae8 28. Qe2 and white tries to apply pressure on John's knight on g4 (see diagram) but this gives John the opportunity to gain a piece - can you see it?

John played 28. ...Rxf4 and white cannot retake as 29. exf4 Rxe2 follows and white resigned.

A win also for Frank Robinson from Spalding and draws for Kieran Burt and Amogh Pilani were all that Lincolnshire could muster as Leicestershire ran out 9-3 winners but it is early days as there are 7 counties in the group with the top three going forward to the national stages.

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

