

Grantham Sharks II, Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL, were in Solihull at the St.John's Hotel for the second week end (rounds 3 and 4 out of 7) in Pool A of Division 2. At the end of round 2 were in mid-table on 2 points aiming for a top-four finish to qualify for the promotion pool.

Their week-end did not start well as they went down 6-2 to Manx Liberty withy only Aditya Munshi from West Nottingham gaining a win.

On the Sunday they were paired against Wood Green Monarchs and on board 6 captain Nigel Birtwistle, who also captains Grantham in the Notts League Division 1 and one of the Lincolnshire County Teams, was paired as white against Diana-Maria Serbanescu and we pick up the game after black has just played 22. ...Bg7 (see diagram) giving Nigel the opportunity to disrupt black's pawn structure - can you see it?

Nigel played 23. Nc5 Bf5 24. g4 Be6 25. Rxd8 Rxd8 26. Nxe6 fxe6 doubling the e pawns and exposing the pawn on g6 27. Be4 g5 28. c5 Kf7 29. a6 bxa6 30. Ra1 Qb7 31. Ra5 Ne7 32. Qa4 Nd5 33. Rxa6 Qxb5 34. Rxa7+ Kg8 35. Qxb5 Nxb5 and although parity is maintained black's pawn structure is still a weakness.

Nigel took advantage with 36. Re7 Nd5 37. Rxe6 Nxe3 38. fxe3 Rd1+ 39. Kf2 Rc1 40. Rxc6 Bf8 41. Bd5+ Kg7 42. Rc7+ Kg6 43. c6 preventing black from winning back the pawn and Nigel went on to win a few moves later.

A win also for Samuel Milson from Louth and draws for Paul Cumbers and Graeme Kafka were not enough to prevent a 5-3 loss leaving Grantham, still on 2 points, in 7th place.

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

