

Lincolnshire's team in the Minor Counties competition played their third match in this season's Midland Counties qualifying competition when they were the visitors to Bramcote Village Hall in West Nottingham. Having won their first 2 matches, a win for Lincolnshire would guarantee them a place in the national finals where they are defending champions having beaten Suffolk in last season's final. Hosts Nottinghamshire, on the other hand, have 2 points from their opening 2 matches so a result is needed for them to secure a top 3 qualifying place.

On board 15 Stuart MacDonald from Grimsby who had been brought in a short notice to replace Chris Holt from Grantham who had gone down with the flu was paired as white against Julian Cast from Long Eaton and we pick up game after black has just played 25. ...Qxh2 regaining the pawn lost to Stuart earlier in the game (see diagram).

With all to play for play continued 26. Qd5 Rhf8 27. Qg2 Qh6 declining a queen exchange 28. Kg1 Kb8 29. Rd3 g5 30. Nd5 Re2 31. Rad1 c6 32. Nb4 a5 and it looks like Stuart's knight is trapped so he played 33. g4 Nh4 34. Qg3+ Ka8 35. Qc7 Nf3+ and black has put his knight in a threatening position - however, this turns out to be a mistake as Stuart played 36. Rxf3 and black resigned as 36. ...Rxf3 37. Qxa5+ Kb8 38. Rd8 mate follows.

Wins also for Nick Stead and Joe Kilshaw also from Grimsby, Samuel Milson from Louth, Paul Cumbers from Sheffield, Stuart Williams from Grantham and Ian McDonald from Lincoln plus draws for captain Nigel Birtwistle, Ivan David and Andrew Hebert gave Lincolnshire a narrow 8½ to 7½ win.

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

