

This week's game has been sent to me by Nigel Birtwistle from the Minor Counties National Quarterfinal match against Norfolk when, as reported last week, Lincolnshire came out victorious by 9½ to 6½.

Nigel has been captain of the team for several seasons and has put together a very strong group of players. This season they won all four of their MCCU group stage qualifiers and last season were crowned champions having beaten Suffolk in the final held at Warwick castle. In fact the last time Lincolnshire were beaten was in December 2016 when they lost narrowly to Worcestershire in the MCCU group stages.

In this game Nigel was paired as black on board 2 against Stephen Orton from Norwich and we pick up the game after white has just played 38. Kb4 (see diagram) with Nigel a pawn up but it looks like his pawn on a3 is unlikely to survive.

So Nigel played 38. ...e4 39. fxe4 a2 and now white is forced to take this with his knight 40. Nxa2 Bxe4 allowing Nigel to take the pawn on e4 and now has both pawns on c2 and g2 at his mercy.

White defends the pawn on c2 41. c4 Bxg2 maintaining the pawn advantage but white now has a passed pawn 42. Nc3 g5 43. Kc5 h5 44. Kb6 h4 45. c5 f5 46. Ne2 f4 47. Nd4 Be4 48. c6+ Bxc6 49. Nxc6 and Nigel is forced to sacrifice his bishop but still has those 3 king side pawns 49. ...Kd6 50. Nd4 g4 51. Kb5 Kd5 52. Nf5 Ke4 53. Nd6+ Kd3 54. Nc4 g3 55. hxg3 hxg3 56. Ne5+ Ke2 57. Ng6 f3 58. Nf4+ Kf1 and white resigned.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the Lincoln Labour Club, Grafton House, 32 Newland. LN1 1XG on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.  
[www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk](http://www.lincolinchessclub.co.uk)

