

The Division 2 South campaign reached a pivotal stage when reigning champions Grantham visited Grafton House where league leaders Lincoln A were the hosts. Lincoln were well clear of the field with 11 points from 6 matches with Grantham back in 4th place with 6 points from 5 matches. With 8 matches being played in total Grantham were the only team capable of overtaking Lincoln but needed to win all their remaining matches.

On board 1 Lincoln's Latvian import Andreas Sivacenko was paired as white against Grantham captain Ben Mason with the opening following the French Tarrasch variation 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. Bd3 c5 6. c3 Nc6 7. Ne2 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 and both players have castled without any captures 9. Kh1 Qb6 10. Nf3 f6 11. Nf4 Nd8 12. Qc2 f5 13. g4 c4 but all that changed with Andreas's next move as he played 14. Bxf5 exf5 15. gxf5 giving away a bishop for 2 pawns but finishing with two threatening pawns on e5 and f5.

Play continued 15. ...Qc6 16. Rg1 Nxe5 17. Nxe5 and black felt compelled to sacrifice a knight for a pawn 17. ...Qd6 18. Nh5 Bxf5 19. Rxc7 and Andreas opens up the g-file whilst maintaining the pawn advantage 19. ...Kh8 20. Qe2 Bf6 21. Bf4 Qe6 22. Rag1 Bxc7 23. Nxc7 and Andreas seems happy to give up the exchange 23. ...Be4+ 24. f3 Qf6 25. Nh5 Qh4 and black is attacking both the knight on h5 and the bishop on f4 (see diagram) but Andreas found a winning move - can you see it?

Andreas played 26. Qg2 threatening 27. Qg7 mate so black played 26. ...Ne6 but Andreas still won as he played 27. Qg8+ Rxc7 28. Nf7 mate.

Draws for Herman Kok, Jules Brown and Neil Roberts meant that Lincoln A won both the match, and the title, by 2½ to 1½.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the Lincoln Labour Club, Grafton House, 32 Newland. LN1 1XJ on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.
www.lincolnchessclub.co.uk

