

Lincoln's team in Division 2 North were in action when Louth were the visitors to Grafton House. Lincoln's defence of the title they won last year has stuttered so far this season with only 2 points from their opening 4 matches and with half the season gone they trailed leaders Scunthorpe by 5 points. However, Louth were routed to the bottom the table losing all 3 of their opening matches so this was perhaps an opportunity for Lincoln to close the gap on the leaders.

On board 3 Lincoln's Neil Roberts was paired as white against Sam Dales with the opening following the Sicilian Defence Smith-Morra Gambit 1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. c3 dxc3 where white sacrifices a pawn for faster development 4. Nxc3 a6 5. Bc4 e6 6. Nf3 h6 7. 0-0 Nc6 and Neil has castled before black has moved any of his pieces.

Play continued 8. Qe2 Bc5 9. Rfd1 Nge7 10. a3 Ng6 11. b4 Ba7 12. b5 Nce5 13. Nxe5 Nxe5 14. Bb3 0-0 and Neil has a strong bishop on b3 whereas black's white squared bishop is yet to move 15. Qh5 Qf6 16. Qe2 a5 17. Bb2 Qg6 18. b6 Bb8 19. Nb5 Nc6 20. Rd3 Ra6 21. Rg3 Bxg3 22. fxc3 Rxb6 and Neil has lost the exchange and the pawn on b6 but the f-file is open 23. Rf1 Qg5 24. a4 Qd8 25. h4 Ra6 26. Qg4 g5 27. Qh5 e5 and black block's off the bishop on b2 but Neil's bishop in b3 comes into play (see diagram).

Neil closes in with 28. Qg6+ Kh8 29. Qxh6+ Kg8 30. Rf6 Ne7 31. Qxg5+ Ng6 32. Qxg6+ Kh8 33. Qh6+ Kg8 34. Bxe5 and black resigned.

A win also for Herman Kok and a draw for Ian McDonald gave Lincoln a narrow win by 2.5 to 1.5.

Lincoln Chess Club play at the Lincoln Labour Club, Grafton House, 32 Newland. LN1 1XJ on Wednesdays at 7.30pm although we are not meeting during the Coronavirus crisis.  
[www.lincolnchessclub.co.uk](http://www.lincolnchessclub.co.uk)

