

Lincoln's team in the Open/Minor section of the MCCU qualifying competition played their final match of the season against near neighbours Nottinghamshire at Bramcote Memorial Hall. Lincolnshire, lying in second place and thus assured of a place in the national finals, needed a win to finish equal top with Warwickshire. Nottinghamshire, on the other hand, were bottom of the table with only 1 win to show for their season.

On board 2, Lincolnshire captain Nigel Birtwistle from Grantham was paired as white against Peter Mercks from the Gambit club in Nottingham and we pick up the game after black has just played 17. ...Bxa2 (see diagram) taking the pawn to bring the game materially level.

Nigel played 18. Rb7 Bf6 19. Rxa7 Bc4 regaining the pawn and taking control of the 7<sup>th</sup> rank 20. Ba3 e6 21. Rb1 Bd5 22. Nb5 Be5 23. Bd6 Bf6 24. Nc7+ and Nigel closes in for the kill 24. ...Kd8 25. Nxd5 exd5 26. Rxf7 Bxc3 27. Rbb7 Ra8 28. g3 h5 29. Rbd7+ Ke8 30. Rfe7+ and black resigned as 30. ...Kf8 31. Re6+ leads to mate in a couple of moves.

Wins also for Paul Cumbers, Nick Stead, Graham Ladds, David Scott, Chris Hill, Stuart MacDonald and Ben Mason plus draws for Murray Smith, Stuart Williams, Joe Kilshaw, David Coates, Andy Hebert, Dennis Browning, Grenville Wollerton and Alan Nelder gave Lincolnshire an Emphatic 12-4 win with all 16 players getting a mention.

As it happens Lincolnshire, reigning champions of the nation Minor section, have elected to enter with the big boys in the Open section but they have yet to play due to the lockdown.

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)

