

At Lincoln Chess Club we have both Standard Play and Rapidplay competitions for club members to play against each other and also have their results graded. In the Autumn 2021 Standard Play, which ran from September to December, Ben Ashcroft and myself were equal first coming into the final week so we agreed to play each other.

Ben, who moved to Lincoln from Aberdeen, is an I.T. wizz and runs his own company called Bugs and Bytes. I can vouch for his excellent service having bought 3 of his computers, 2 for myself and one for our local church on St.Giles.

In our game, with Ben as white, the opening followed the Sicilian Defense 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bc4 e6 5. e5 dxe5 5. Nxe5 Bd6 and Ben exchanged pawns on e5 opening up the d-file 6. Nf3 a6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Re1 b5 9. Bf1 Bb7 10. d4 cxd4 11. Nxd4 Bc5 12. Be3 Qb6 13. Nf3 Bxe3 14. fxe3 and Ben elected to retake the bishop with the pawn on f2.

Play continued 14. ...Nc6 15. Qe2 Rad8 16. Rad1 Ne7 17. Kh1 Ned5 18. Nxd5 Nxd5 19. e4 and Ben advanced his e-pawn attacking my knight on e5 (see diagram) but was this wise?

I replied with 19. ...Nf4 attacking Ben's queen whose options are limited. His best move was 20. Rxd8 Nxe2 21. Rxf8+ Kxf8 22. Rxe2 leaving my queen and bishop against Ben's rook, bishop and knight 22. ...a5 23. Ne5 Ke7 24. c3 f6 25. Ng4 b4 26. cxb4 Qxb4 27. e5 f5 28. Nf2 Ba6 29. Re1 Qxe1 and Ben resigned. Any other rook move would have lost the bishop.

Ben is also a gifted pianist, so to help overcome his disappointment he, with kind permission, went through his repertoire on the club's piano.

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

