

Lincolnshire played their second game in Division 2 of the Midland Counties Open Championship at Syston near Leicester against Worcester recently. Looking down the list of players grades the two teams were evenly matched and so it proved in the first 15 games to finish there were two wins for each side - David Coates and Keith Noons for Lincolnshire and Eric Horwill and Steve Jukes for Worcester - with the remaining 11 games being drawn.

So, with the match poised at 7½ to 7½ there was one game left between Lincolnshire's Kevin McCarthy and Nigel Towers and with the tension mounting as team mates from both sides crowded round we pick up the games after Nigel, as white, has just played 41. Nxb1 exchanging rooks (see diagram).

Kevin's pawn on f4 is attacked by white's queen but cannot take as 42. Qxf4 Rxb1 so Kevin played 41. ...h5 42. Qc2 hxc4 43. hxc4 Qh4. White is now in difficulties as to how to defend the pawn on g4. 44. f3 Qg3+ loses the pawns on f3 and g4 opening up white's king, and any queen move is met by 44. ...Rxb1. As it was white played 44. Kf3 but Kevin saw the opportunity and 44. ...Qh1+ 45. Kxf4 Qxb1 winning the piece for a pawn.

Given the situation Nigel carried on but Kevin was able to pick up a couple of pawns before exchanging queens and eventually made the extra piece tell and Nigel resigned as his flag was about to fall.

Having lost to Derbyshire, Lincolnshire must win their remaining game against Staffordshire to have any hope of qualifying for the national minor counties competition.

