

The Division 2 South season is well underway now but it is anything but clear as to the outcome. All five teams Boston, Lincoln, Louth, Spalding and Grantham are in with a shout with 1 point covering the first 4 teams.

The latest encounter was at South Park where Lincoln were hosts to Boston and on board four Lincoln secretary Dave Bull was paired as black against John Handley with the opening following Dave's favourite King's Indian defence 1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. h3 Bg7 5. Nf3 0-0 6. Be2 a6 7. Nh2 b5 8. Ng4 and in an unusual line John was perhaps looking for 8. ...Nxc3 9. hxc3 opening up the h-file for white's rook. Dave was not tempted and played ...Bb7 9. d5 b4 10. Nxf6+ Bxf6 11. Nb1 c6 12. c3 cxd5 13. exd5 bxc3 14. Nxc3 Bxc3+ 15. bxc3 and the latest exchange has weakened white's pawns (see diagram). Can you see how Dave took advantage?

Dave played 15. ...Qa5 attacking both the pawns on c3 and d5 whilst preventing 16. c4. John played 16. Bf3 Qxc3+ 17. Bd2 Qc4 18. Qb3 Qxb3 19. axb3 Nd7 20. Be3 Ne5 21. Rd1 Nxf3+ 22. gxf3 causing more damage to white's pawn structure and Dave played 22. ...e6 knowing that white could not respond 23. dxe6 as Bxf3 would fork the two rooks 23. Ke2 Bxd5 and Dave is now two pawns up and white resigned a few moves later.

Draws for yours truly and Robert Dale countered by a win for Boston's Lee Hall meant that the match finished 2-2 further muddying the waters. You can follow the league results on www.lincschess.co.uk.

