

Lincoln's Division 2 team continued on their travels with a visit to the Shirley Croft Hotel in Grantham. Neither team can win the title, with Boston and Spalding contesting top spot, but there was still plenty to play for with Lincoln, reigning champions Louth and Grantham all trying to avoid the wooden spoon.

On board 1 Lincoln's Ian McDonald was paired as black against Giorgio Pierbattisti with the opening following the Scotch defense 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. g3 d5 5. exd5 Nxd5 6. Nxd5 Qxd5 7. Bg2 Qe4+ 8. Qe2 Qxe2+ 9. Kxe2 and in a quickfire opening the queens have been exchanged with white unable to castle.

Play continued 9. ...Bg4 10. Kf1 0-0-0 11. Ng5 Bh5 12. Bxc6 bxc6 13. Kg2 h6 14. Ne4 f5 15. Nc3 e4 and Ian pushes his pawns towards the white king 16. Re1 Bf3+ 17. Kf1 h5 18. h4 g5 19. d3 (not 19. hxg5 h4 20. gxh4 Rxh4 and 21. ...Rh1) gxh4 20. dxe4 h3 and Ian now has a passed pawn 21. Kg1 h4 22. Kh2 (see diagram).

Ian now played 22. ...Bc5 23. Be3 Bxe3 24. Rxe3 allowing white's pieces back into the game. In post match analysis Ian himself felt that 22. ...hxg3+ was a better option leading to 23. fxg3 Bh6 24. Bxh6 Rxh6 25. Nb1 (preventing Rd2+) Bxe4. As it was play continued 24. ...hxg3+ 25. Kxg3 fxe4 26. Nxe4 h2 27. Rxf3 h1(Q) 28. Rxh1 Rxh1 winning the exchange and Ian went on to win a few moves later.

Draws for Hannah Dale and yours truly meant that the match finished 2-2 meaning that the destiny of the wooden spoon is still to be decided.

