

Pandora's Box is Lincolnshire's own team in the 4NCL (Four Nations Chess League) and this week's game features Boston captain Nigel Birtwistle in their first match in Division 4 against Monmouth at the Paragon Hotel in Birmingham, a stiff test against an experienced team who finished mid-table last season.

Nigel was paired on board 3 as white against Lee Davis with the opening following the King's Indian 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nge2 e5 6. d5 0-0 giving Nigel's a slight advantage with his advanced pawns 7. Ng3 a5 8. Be2 Na6 9. h4 h5 10. Bg5 Qe8 11. Qd2 Kh7 12. 0-0 Bd7 13. Rael Ng8 14. Bd3 Bh6 15. f4 Nc5 16. Bc2 Bxg5 17. hxg5 exf4 and a complex position has developed with black trying to fend off Nigel's attack (see diagram). However, this has given Nigel an opportunity - can you see his next move?

Nigel played 18. Nxh5 (18. ...gxh5 19. e5+ would lead to a strong attack). However, Lee replied with 18. ...Qe5 19. Nf6+ Nxf6 20. gxf6 Qxf6 21. Rxf4 leaving the position materially equal but opening up the h-file to black's king.

Nigel took advantage 21. ...Qe7 22. e5 Rae8 23. Re2 Qd8 24. exd6 Rxe2 25. Nxe2 cxd6 26. Qd4 f6 27. Rh4+ Kg7 28. Qf4 g5 forking queen and rook. Advantage to black? - no, this allowed Nigel to complete the win with a neat finish 29. Rh7+ Kg8 30. Qh2 f5 31. Rh8+ Kf7 32. Qh7+ Kf6 33. Qh6+ Ke7 34. Qxg5+ and black resigned.

A win for Robert Taylor and a draw for David Coates were not enough to prevent Monmouth winning by 3½ to 2½.

