

Lincolnshire's team in the 4NCL, Pandora's Box, when into the final week-end of the season lying in 5th place. With the top four teams gaining promotion Pandora needed to pull out all the stops against some high quality opposition.

The first match was against 4th place Anglian Avengers with Pandora draughting in John Emms from Wood Green and Glaswegian Stephen Mannion on the top two boards. Wins for these two together with wins for Pandora regulars Jason Dilley and Jos Woolley gave our team a flying 5-1 start.

In the penultimate round Pandora were matched against leaders Jutes of Kent with John Emms and Stephen Mannion again winning on the top two boards. Draws for Grimsby's Neven Djipa and Boston's Nigel Birtwistle meant that Pandora gained a creditable draw 3-3.

So to the final round with Pandora on 14 points lying in joint second place needing a good result against Cambridge University II to maintain their position. On board I John Emms was matched as white against Charles Pickard and we pick up the game after Charles has played 26. ...Qd5 (see diagram). John then played a game winning move can you spot it?

John played 27. Bc4 as 27. ...Qxc4 28. Rh8+ Ng8 29. Qd6+ Re7 30. Qxe7 is mate. Also 27. ...g5 28. Qf6 Ng8 29. Rxe8+ Rxe8 30. Bxd5 Nxf6 31. Rxf6 leaves white a piece up. Black played 27. ...Ng6 but resigned after 28. Rh8+ as 28. ...Nxb8 29. Bxd5 wins the queen.

Another win for Stephen Mannion and draws for Robert Taylor and Nick Payne meant that the match ended 3-3 enabling Pandora's Box pop the corks after securing second place and thus promotion to Division 3.

In last weeks puzzle 1. Qc7 unlocks blacks defence.

