

Lincoln's team in Division 2 South saw an end of season fixture against Spalding. In recent years these two teams have shared the top two places in each of the last four years with Lincoln taking the title on three occasions so a hard fought encounter was in the offing.

On board four I had the pleasure of controlling the black pieces against Spalding captain Frank Robinson with play starting with the queen's opening 1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. e3 e6 4. b3 Bd6 5. Bd3 Nbd7 6. Nc3 a6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. e4 dxe4 9. Nxe4 Nxe4 10. Bxe4 Nf6 and a rapid fire exchange has cleared the centre ready for the second wave 11. Bd3 b5 12. Bb2 Bb7 13. c4 bxc4 14. bxc4 c5 15. Rb1 cxd4 16. Bxd4 which I was pleased about as it set up a nice combination (see diagram) can you spot it?

I played 16. ...Bxf3 17. Qxf3 Bxh2+ 18. Kxh2 Qxd4 winning a pawn 19. Rbd1 Qh4+ 20. Qh3 Qxh3+ 21. Kxh3 Rfd8 22. Rfe1 g6 23. f3 Rd4 (22. ...g6 prevented 24. Bxh2+) 24. Be4 Rad8 25. Rxd4 Rxd4 26. c5 and black has a worrying passed pawn, fortunately I was able to calculate that 26. ...Nxe4 27. Rxe4 Rxe4 28. fxe4 Kf8 left just enough time for my king to intercept white's pawn and white resigned a few moves later.

A win for Herman Kok and a draw for captain Robert Dale ensured that Lincoln took the spoils by 2½ to 1½ ensuring that Lincoln finished ahead of Spalding in the final table.

Louth took this season's title honours with Grantham coming up on the rails to take second place ahead of Lincoln.

Co-incidentally, this year's campaign gets underway with a home fixture against Spalding on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

