

The Club Championship is Lincoln Chess Clubs main internal competition starting in September and continuing through to May. Division 1 captain David Coates has won the competition in each of the last three seasons so the rest of us mere mortals have to be at our best when playing him.

In our match played recently David was white with my response following the Sicilian defence 1. e4 c5 2. c3 e5 3. Nf3 d6 4. Bc4 Qe7 5. 0-0 Be6 6. Bxe6 Qxe6 7. d4 Nf6 (not 7. ...cxd4 8. cxd4 exd4 9. Nxd4 preferring to maintain a closed position) 8. Re1 Be7 9. Na3 a6 10. d5 Qd7 11. Nc4 Qc7 12. a4 Nbd7 13. a5 0-0 14. Qc2 b5.

David could have played 15. axb6 (en passant) Nxb6 16. Nxb6 Qxb6 but instead played 15. Ne3 Rfe8 16. Nf5 Bf8 17. Qd2 c4 18. Qg5 Nc5 19. Nd2 Nd3 (see diagram) which gave me an opportunity to place my knight in a forward outpost.

I still had David's strong king's side attack to contend with 20. Re3 Qc5 (preventing 21. Rg3 Qxf2+) 21. b4 Qa7 22. Rf3 Kh8 23. Ba3 Ng8 24. Rf1 g6 25. Rg3 Nf4 and my knight found another outpost threatening 26. ...Ne2+. 26. Qg4 Nh6 27. Nxh6 Bxh6 and I have managed to take the sting out of David's attack 28. Bc1 Nd3 29. Qe2 Qe7 30. Rxd3 cxd3 31. Qxc3 and David has to concede the exchange.

Can I take advantage? 31. ...Rac8 32. Qh3 Bxd2 33. Bxd2 Rc4 34. Re1 f6 35. Re3 Qf7 36. g4 (preventing 36. ...f5) and David managed to thwart all attempts to open up the position and a draw was agreed a few moves later.

