

Lincolnshire's county season came to a close at the Spital in Chesterfield against Greater Manchester, the same opponents and venue as last seasons Midland Counties semi-final. This year the format had changed from the East and West zonal split to a two division system and Lincolnshire's reward for last season's successes was a place in the inaugural Division 1.

Keith Noons who plays for Barton-on-Humber in the Scunthorpe and District League was playing in his first match for the county against Philip Armstrong on board 14 with Keith, as black, opening with the Robatch defence 1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. Nc3 d6 4. Be3 c6 5. Qd2 b6 6. f4 Bb7 7. Nf3 Nd7 8. Bd3 b5 9. 0-0 h6 conceding the centre to white in a circumspect opening 10. Ne2 c5 11. c3 c4 12. Bc2 Ngf6 13. Ng3 Ng4 14. h3 Nxe3 15. Qxe3 which opened up the position for Keith's fianchetto bishops.

Play continued 15. ...0-0 16. Rael e5 17. Ne2 Rc8 18. g4 Qb6 19. h4 b4 20. Ng3 exd4 21. cxd4 c3 22. b3 Nf6 23. g5 Ng4 24. Qd3 a5 setting up a strong position for black (see diagram). White sees what's coming 25. Qd1 Ba6 but still loses the exchange as 26. Rf2 Nxf2 27. Kxf2.

Keith took advantage with 27. ...f6 28. Kg2 fxe5 29. fxe5 Rxf3 30. Qxf3 sacrificing the exchange but allowing 30. ... Qxd4 31. Rd1 Qe5 32. Rd5 Qe6 33. Rxa5 Rf8 34. Qe3 Bc8 35. Kg1 Qg4 36. Kg2 Qh3+ 37. Kg1 Bd4 a neat finish as 38. Qxd4 Qxg3 lead to mate and white resigned.

A win for Rick Davey and draws for Nigel Birtwistle, Ted Nottingham, Ian McDonald, Graham Ladds, Mike Kelly and Lee Hall meant that Manchester ran out winners by 11 points to 5 leaving Lincolnshire relegated from Division 1.

