

Lincoln's Division 2 team made the long trek to Spalding for the latest round of this season's championship. Lincoln's win against Grantham the previous week meant that they joined Spalding and Boston on 5 points with each team having played 4 games with reigning champions Louth on 3 points with a game in hand.

So with half the season gone the championship battle is as tight as ever so a win in this game would allow either team to take a two point lead. On board 3, Lincoln's Richard Kerrigan was paired as black against Spalding secretary David Carew with the opening following the Ruy Lopez 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. d3 Bg4 allowing Richard to pin white's knight on f3.

Play continued 10. Be3 Na5 11. Bc2 Qd7 12. b4 Nc6 13. Nbd2 d5 (threatening 14. ...d4 15. cxd4 cxd4 trapping the bishop) 14. Bc5 Bxc5 15. bxc5 Rfe8 16. a4 b4 17. c4 dxe4 18. Nxe4 Nxe4 19. Rxe4 and Richard sees an opportunity to bring pressure on white's position (see diagram) - can you see it?

Richard played 19. ...Nd4 (giving multiple threats of 20. ...Nxf3+ or 20. ...Nxc2) 20. Qd2 Bxf3 21. Rxd4 and white has to give up the exchange as 21. gxf3 Nxf3+ wins the queen 21. ...Qxd4 22. gxf3 Qxa1+ ( a mistake although 22. Re1 Bc6 would still have left black a rook to the good) and white resigned a few moves later.

However, Richard's win was in vain as only a draw for yours truly could be added to Lincoln's tally and Spalding won 2½-1½.

