



## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT 2



### GM-group

Second seeded GM Evgeny Postny not unexpectedly heads the group of five players at 2/2, today winning convincingly as black in a complex battle against IM John Paul Wallace.

As GM Erik Blomqvist failed to overcome the active defence of IM David Eggleston, Postny however is the only GM on shared first place.

The youngest player in the top group is 12 year old (!?! ) Indian FM Sarin Nihal, today winning an intense 24 moves game as black against countryman Garg Aradhya.

the remaining three players at 2/2 all are young, Norwegian and title norm candidates.

Today's Norwegian hero was still accelerated FM Benjamin Arvola, reaching 2400 for the first time by winning a very exciting six hour attacking drama against IM Awonder Liang.

Meanwhile FM Lars Oskar Hauge turned the tide from an awkward black opening and defeated FM Erik Hedman, while IM Johan-Sebastian Christiansen kept up the speed from one of his opening preparations and completed the endgame win against GM Heikki Westerinen.

Top rated GM Andrey Vovk introduced himself immediately after his arrival by knocking out the Finn surprise man FM Jari Järvenpää. The small group of player at 1.5/2 apart from Vovk, Greenfeld, Blomqvist and Eggleston also includes the young Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal, today crushing IM Petter Haugli with an instructive kingside attack.

In short before the double round: Second round in the GM group became a truly hard-fought one, with only one draw on the first seven boards. And this GM group has made a very interesting start!

Then first board meeting between Australian IM John Paul Wallace (2404) and Israeli GM Evgeny Postny (2606) started up with a Slav opening line, in which white appears better after black wasted some time with Bf5-Be4-Bg6.

13.g4?! and 14.g5 was double-edged at best from a white point of view, but a complex position followed after black forced himself to sacrifice a piece for three pawns.

From move 25 on Postny made all the better calculations in the middle game, and gradually increased his advantage. Following a tactical queen exchange in the fourth hour, his rook and two kingside pawns decided overwhelmingly against white's two minor pieces.

GM Erik Blomqvist (2548) versus IM David Eggleston (2394) was a positional Sicilian duel, in which white's d5-pawn gave him a little more space after the a-, b- and c-pawns all had left the board. Eggleston defended actively with a tactical 20.--- Nxe4!

Although white won two minor pieces for rook and pawn, he without any queenside pawns never looked close to winning chances with king, bishop, knight and three pawns against king, rook and four pawns.



FM Benjamin Arvola (2385) versus IM Awonder Liang (2483) was a key game for both player's tournament start and norm chances.

Arvola entered a usually solid and Classical Nimzo-Indian line, but then immediately accelerated it with 5.e4. Hitting in with a preparation, the 23 year old Tromsø comet later sacrificed his e5-pawn to kick black's queen around on the kingside.

Liang in turn defended creatively by sacrificing a knight on e4, and helped

by some inaccuracies from white he got two pawns and some counterplay against white's king.

As black started advancing his pawn majority on the kingside, a tense struggle followed in the fourth hour.

Liang's chances improved as he snatched a third pawn on c4 during mutual time pressure, but Arvola at move 41 bravely placed his king on g3 and played for an attack against black's king on h6.

43.--- Qc1? probably was the decisive mistake, threatening nothing and offering white a free hand with his kingside attack.

With both players short of time from around move 50, both made some mistakes in a highly demanding position. White still remained more or less winning all of the time, and following a highly entertaining time trouble duel he after 63 moves completed his mating attack by sacrificing his knight on e6. Both players at that stage had less than one minute left to complete the game.

Arvola following this win is unofficially at 2400 for the first time in his life, and will complete his IM-title if making his third norm this tournament.

FM Erik Hedman (2367) – IM Lars Oskar Hauge (2450) was a Catalan in which something first went wrong for black, as white after 19 moves had a pair of bishops and a c-file pointing against black's king on c8.

Exchanging a bishop for a knight with 20.Bxd5? was a positional misunderstanding that became a turning point, as black was no way worse in the following position with opposite colored bishops plus king, queen, two rooks and six pawns on each side.

Hedman later cramped and spent too much time without finding any good plan. Opening the kingside with a h3-break and the queenside with a b4-break was a creative plan, but not a good one – as Hauge efficiently cashed in a pawn on the queenside, and after exchanging queens came better in the rook and bishop endgame.

Hedman nearly lost on time at move 40 after writing a move twice on the scoresheet, but realized the danger and threw out one more move just in time. Due to his active king white still had drawing

chances with king, rook, bishop and one pawns versus king, rook, bishop and three pawns towards the end of the fifth hour. 60.Kxc4?? however was a collapse leading straight to a lost pawn endgame, while several other moves could have given excellent drawing chances.

IM Johan-Sebastian Christiansen (2429) versus GM Heikki Westerinen (2314) was a true Nordic generation duel, as black started up with 54 year more experience than white.

White on the other hand had the better opening preparation, and got a sound positional advantage from a King's Indian Fianchetto. After the queens were exchanged, white had a pleasant pressure with no risk in an endgame with king, two rooks, one bishop and seven pawns in each side.

Still a great practical fighter, Westerinen defended actively by giving up a pawn. He succeeded reaching an apparently drawish double rook endgame with two versus three kingside pawns. White in the fifth hour however still had the more active rooks, the safer king and the less vulnerable pawns, and forced his way to a won rook endgame after 54 moves.



**Sarin Nihal**

Garg Aradhya (2315) versus FM Sarin Nihal (2424) on the other hand was an Indian teenager duel. The opening was a Queen's Gambit in which white sacrificed a pawn for somewhat loose compensation and then went for a kingside attack with 13.h4?! White still had some compensation for the pawn before he went astray with 17.Nxf7? Rxf7 18.Qxe6.

Sarin Nihal spent much more time on the clock today, but had no problem consolidating his king with an extra piece, and again won before 25

moves. Do not misunderstand: This 12 year old has already got all the norms and ELO points needed to get his IM-title, and is already playing for a GM norm.

Ukraine GM Andriy Vovk (2636) immediately after his arrival from the Hungarian team league started discussing a Classical French opening line with FM Jari Järvenpää (2244).

White clearly was better prepared for this discussion as black had to struggle with a backward pawn at e6, while white started a promising queenside pawn storm.

As white had a passed pawn on b7 and a dominating pair of bishops, sacrificing an exchange on c4 at move 34 was hardly necessary. It still worked out very well, as black lost about a ton of material within a few moves. Järvenpää is back on earth following his sensational first round win, while first seeded Andriy Vovk definitely has arrived.



Third seeded GM Peter Prohaszka (2592) entered the ring as black against GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2540) only a few minutes after his arrival to Fagernes. The opening was a Caro-Kann with 2.Nf3 3.Nc3, in which white following an early queen exchange might have had a very slight plus due to black's two f-pawns. Both the GMs later made sound moves, and so the game balanced into a rook and knight endgame which was drawn by a

repetition after 31 moves.

This GM draw in short was not a game for the headlines, but probably a very good game.



GM Frode Urkedal (2552) as white against IM Petter Haugli (2257) went for a tough King's Indian line with 6.h3 and 8.g4. Black's decision to reply with a f5-advance was understandable, but still misunderstood, as the open g-file soon gave white a promising attacking chance. White later on made a few inaccuracies, but he kept a strong initiative and decisively opened the kingside against black's king with the exchange sacrifice 26.h5!

Urkedal seemed to enjoy the remaining seven moves as much as the dinner buffet afterwards – not for no reason as white had a material advantage and a kingside attack, while black had nothing anywhere.

FM Luis Couso (2287) and GM Alon Greenfeld (2550) tested out an English fianchetto line in which the center was blown up after white played d4 and black d5.

After the c- and d-pawns were exchanged the position looked about equal, but it soon turned out that white's e5-pawn was a weakness more than an asset.

22.Bxh6? was a too loose piece sacrifice, but black anyway was much better then.

Returning the piece with 25... Qxe5 later was (of course) not the computer preference.

Still it was a very practical human choice: Greenfeld with the better pieces and pawns later had no problems winning the rooks and minor piece endgame.

FM Johannes Haug (2297) as white against GM Boris Chatalbashev (2546) chose a rather tame Sicilian line with 3.Bb5 and 4.Bxc6. Black following this had no problems from the opening, and had a promising position after he sacrificed his d-pawn to cripple white's kingside pawns with 15... Bxf3 16.gxf3.

18... Rxf3? however was overdoing it, as white could trap the rook on f3 with 19.Be3 and 20.Kg2. Having won a rook for a pawn, white for sure could have won the game as well. Worrying about his



airy king, Haug still pulled the brake by allowing a perpetual queen check between g4 and h4, and Chatalbashev of course did not hesitate taking it.

For different reasons I guess, the GM and the FM both looked fairly well satisfied after this draw.

Needless to say, 16 year old Haug following his second draw against a GM above 2500 has had a very promising start on this IM norm hunt.

IM Valeriy Kazakovskiy (2454) versus WGM Marsel Eroimsky (2300) was another Catalan duel, in which white's pair of bishops gave him a slight plus all the way into an endgame with king, two bishops, knight and six pawns versus king, bishop, two knights and six pawns.

Efroimsky again defended soundly.

Without too many nervous moments she escaped into a bishop endgame in which white had an extra pawn – but still no extra winning chances, due to opposite colored bishop and a black fortress set up.



The Norwegian teenager duel between FM Lucas Ranaldi (2309) and Trygve Dahl (2099) started up with an about balanced King's Indian fianchetto line. 16.g4? however was a positional weakening based upon a tactical miscalculation, as black suddenly had a dangerous kingside attack after Nd4 followed by Qh4. Walking uphill Ranaldi stumbled with 19.Ne1?, after which Dahl in an inspired mood crashed through and completed his attack before 25 moves.

The game between Mikael Aroven (2097) and FM Anders Hobber (2297) made a highly original start with 1.c4 c6 2.Qa4?!. Black following this of course had no problems equalizing in the opening, and after 12 moves was ready to start a kingside attack with f5.

Having successfully advanced the pawn to f4, Hobber was much too helpful when exchanging it on e3. Sacrificing a rook for a bishop on f4 later started a creative search for a win on the dark squares, and black might well have wasted some winning chances around move 30-37.

Aroven at move 38 however found a strong defence plan when sacrificing back a rook on black's bishop on e3. After the time control it all dried up with a very drawish rook endgame – followed by an even more drawish pawn endgame.

FM Eivind Risting (2250) as white against Håkon Bentsen (2074) went for a Catalan in which black first was close to equal, but then clearly much worse following a too loose pawn sacrifice on c5. As the Na5-Nc4-maneuver only succeeded increasing black's problems, white and his passed c-pawn was close to winning around move 25.

Exchanging queens afterwards however was a serious misunderstanding, as the rook endgame was no way an easy win. Bentsen defended well in this endgame, and Risting due to his scattered pawns gave up his winning attempts after 50 moves.

FM Ward Al-Tarbosh (2219) as white against Willy Kristiansen (2055) was introduced for a Ruy Lopez Berlin defence. True enough he did not come up with much of an opening advantage after exchanging the queens on d8. Kristiansen however spent much time without finding any good plan, and one hour behind on the clock he blundered with 23.--- g6? – more or less advertising for 24.e6! fxe6 25.Ne5 with a strong attack.

Helped by his opponents time shortage, Al-Tarbosh in an inspired mood forced a won endgame with rook, knight and five pawns against rook, knight and three pawns. It is still a bit difficult to understand why black in move 52 offered his only remaining pawn with 52.--- c2? - and even more difficult to understand why white did not take it with 53.Nxc2!.

That however changed only the number of moves, as Al-Tarbosh with three connected pawns on the kingside anyway won safely in the knight endgame.

WFM Anita Grønnestad (1966) and Christian Laverton (2159) this afternoon discussed a slow and closed Dutch Stonewall. The position gradually opened between moves 15 and 25, but remained roughly balanced all the way into a bishop endgame.

The bishop endgame would have been drawish if black had invited for pawn exchanges with 37.--- g4! Instead 37.--- Bxg3?? was a blunder losing within three moves, as black's bishop was unable reach back in time to stop white's passed a-pawn after 38.f4!.

Frode Lillevold (2135) and Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2032) started up with a Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line, in which white spent 55 minutes for 13 moves and reached an about equal position.

After black played actively with a thematic Nc5-Nd3-maneuver, the position came to circle around black's passed pawn on d3.

The endgame with rook, knight and six pawns against rook, bishop and six pawns looked fine for black, but white suddenly had all his pieces in optimal positions after black much too helpfully exchanged on e4 in move 37.

42.Nf3?! probably was a mistake that could have given black drawing chances if he had sacrificed his d3-pawn for activity with 42.--- d2!, but after Ingebretsen failed to make use of that final chance he soon drifted into a hopeless minor piece endgame.

## IM-group

Despite a short and intense draw on the first board between GM Ralf Åkesson and FM Kalle Niemi, the IM group had some more fireworks today.

GM Ronald Puijssers joined the 1.5/2 club as he won a tough attacking battle as black against IM Nicolai Getz. So did IM Espen Lie after a very good technical game as white against FM Mikkel Manosri Jacobsen. FM Sebastian Mihajlov became the fifth player to share the lead as he efficiently decided an otherwise open position against Thomas Nyland by a nice tactical blow. Keeping aside Mihajlov and Niemi the norm candidates did not do too well today, and FM Tor Fredrik Kaasen has had a slow start after failing to win a very promising (if still complex) position as white against FM Sondre Merkesvik.



The first board GM Ralf Åkesson (2452) - FM Kalle Niemi (2337) started up as a very modernistic Catalan line, in which black for somewhat mysterious reasons sacrifices a pawn on e5 and destroys his queenside pawn structure. Black reportedly had activity enough to compensate the structure after regaining the pawn on e5, and the game stayed in some kind of dynamic balance into a double rook endgame which the players agreed to declare a draw after 23 moves.

IM Nicolai Getz (2403) against GM Ronald Puijssers (2504) was a key game for both players after their turbulent first round draws. Puijssers went for a Dutch Leningrad set up and got some chances for a kingside attack, while white got much queenside space with pawns on c5 and d5. Black did well after exchanging his e-pawn for white's d-pawn, and suddenly got a highly dangerous attack after 20.Kg2? g5!. White's try to complicate by sacrificing a piece was understandable, but still did not help much as his own king remained by far the more shaky...

Needing 6.0/9 and having 0.5/1, FM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2410) as white against FM Sondre Merkesvik (2239) had to play for a win. He did it with an ambitious Grünfeld exchange line.

12.dxc5!? was a thematic exchange sacrifice, giving a jackpot as black fatally weakened his kingside with 13...f6?.

White after this could win back the exchange on f8 and achieve overwhelming compensation for the pawn due to black's airy king. Merkesvik in turn defended creatively by sacrificing his queen for rook and bishop, and before the first time control had some counterplay due to his passed pawn on c3. When Kaasen playing with queen against rook and bishop finally seemed willing to accept a repetition of moves, Merkesvik for unknown reasons was not.

As black played too slowly the next moves, white in the fifth hour reached a winning position by advancing his passed g-pawn. The final position with queen and three pawns against rook, bishop and two pawns probably was promising for white.

But having only five minutes left on the clock, Kaasen understandably repeated checks instead of putting his queen on c1 to block black's passed pawn on c2.



Merkesvik vs Kaasen (front) and Jacobsen vs Lie (back)

Norwegian IM Espen Lie (2449) as white against young Danish FM Mikkel Manosri Jacobsen (2219) went for an English fianchetto opening and got the sound positional pressure he hoped for. After 15 moves white was ready to snatch a “testimony pawn” on b7. This time it worked out very well, as white after forcing a queen exchange on a7 had an extra pawn and a strong pair of bishops. Instead of just waiting for white's passed a-pawn to advance, black went for active counterplay. Probably playing a very good game, Lie in reply sacrificed an exchange to let the bishops escort in the passed a-pawn. Instructive to the end today, he of course had no problems demonstrating the winning plan with an extra bishop in the bishop endgame.

Thomas Nyland (2104) as white against FM Sebastian Mihajlov (2367) first went for a French exchange line, but soon destroyed the pawn symmetry with b4 and bxa5. Helpful to get rid of the pawn symmetry, Mihajlov after a piece exchange on d6 took back with the pawn, and due to his active pieces did fine despite his doubled d-pawn.

Allowed to repair his pawn structure with d5xc4, black had a promising position after 24 moves. White still was very much in the game until he much too carelessly and fast played 25.Kh2??. Nyland overlooked 25.--- Nh4! 26.Rf2 Rxc2+! with a mate in two to follow. Mihajlov did not, and at 1.5/2 is on schedule for his third IM-norm.



## Elo-group

Again we had only two draws among 29 games played in the Open, and following this remarkably low draw percentage 13 players still has a 100 % score before the double round.

Eight out of the top ten rated players still can be found on this list, and most of them won convincingly today.

Second seeded tournament musician Alf Lundberg (2011) was not one of them, and he had a long working day before he succeeded winning a drawish bishop endgame against Bjarne Engevik (1787).



The sensation on the top boards instead came on the very first one: Top rated Afras Mansoor (2037) lost a messy game as white against the chess entertainer Karim Ali (1841), after overlooking a tactical Nxe3-hit. 13 year old Mansoor after the blunder fought on well, but two pawns short he did not get the help necessary to save a wrecked endgame.

Yesterday's sensation players came back to earth early this afternoon: Eleven year old Ariza Hina (1525) blundered a pawn in the opening and lost against very well playing Jonas Rasmussen (1859), while Sondre Stai (1644) as black was just outplayed by Sara Næss (1909).

Interestingly, the group at 2/2 includes two more female players, as Alena Ayzenberg (1992) gradually increased the pressure and forced Ida Lahlum (1742) into a lost pawn endgame, while the colourful Alta girl Ingrid Greibrokk (1929) crushed the super veteran Aage Mella (1724) with dynamic attacking chess. Age difference in the latter game was an amazing 67 years, illustrating very well what a fascinating mixture such an Open in chess nowadays can be...

Virtually blind Kai-Roger Johansen (1929) also is at 2/2, after seeing many more tactics than his talented young opponent Amalie Merkesvik (1714) today.

A new surprise man worth to follow might be the unrated and unknown Florø player Rune Kleiven Rynning, today winning by a nice kingside attack as white against Jonas August Bernstein (1593).



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All photos: Tom Eriksen