



THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT 3



GM-group

After all the fireworks of round two, round three true enough became a small anti-climax. Both the top boards this morning were drawn without too many exciting moments. Still the four next boards all got a winner, and the remaining three draws all were hard fought and exciting. No player is left with a perfect score after this round, as the Vovk brothers and veteran Rausis are now sharing the lead at 2.5/3.

The first board meeting between GM Igors RAUSIS (2600) and GM Andrey VOVK (2617) was a Dutch Leningrad duel, in which white first came a quarter ahead on the board and clock. 11.Qa4?! > Qxa4 12.Nxa4 however was a very unambitious waste of time, and only two moves later draw was agreed in a balanced position. Both players although losing their 100 % score looked very well satisfied to keep their +2 score.



GM Peter PROHASZKA (2607) and GM Evgeny POSTNY (2670) meanwhile discussed a Catalan with 4.--- Bb4+. 11.Ndc4!? was flashy more than convincing, but still whites pair of bishops afterwards gave him a very slight edge. The rooks and bishop endgame which came on board before 20 moves looked very drawish due to opposite-colored bishops, but white still kept a slight queenside initiative with a4-a5. As Postny had demonstrated a convincing white-square blockade, Prohaszka without further quarreling offered a draw after 30 moves. Undefeated at 2.0/3, both the fourth and first seeded are still inside the car, although none of them are in the front seat after this round.

On third board, GM Yuri VOVK(2626) and GM Matthew TURNER (2493) started up with a Classical Sicilian line. Due to the pair of bishops this is reportedly acceptable for black, although he is playing with an isolated pawn on d6 and two f-pawns. The positional struggle intensified after 13.Bxc6, as black now got two bishops against two knights.

Probably this was fine for black, but if so 18... Qb4? was a serious error allowing white to take initiative with 19.Ne4! and 20.Nf6+. Black following this anyway was in trouble when running into an elegant 23.c4! dxc4 24.a4, trapping the bishop on b5. Black stopped the clock a bit early two moves later, but having won a knight for two pawns white for sure should also win the game. The elder Vovk brother following this win also shares first place at 2.5/3, while Turner got a hard landing after his two first promising jumps.



exchange for counterplay on the kingside. White's passed pawn on c6 still decided, as Antal had no real problems saving his king. Getz following this loss is back on earth, but still with a very promising performance above 2550 for the first three rounds.

GM Gergely ANTAL (2565) had taken the hint that IM Nicolai GETZ (2410) is a gifted tactical player, and made a patient strategic start with 1.e4 2.Nc3 3.g3.

Black appeared healthy from the start blocks, but white's pair of bishops combined with his more active rooks gave him an increasing pressure in the middle game. Finding himself caught in a crumbling cockpit, Getz true to his tactical nature tried to escape out the window by sacrificing an



GM Milos PAVLOVIC (2496) and Sondre MERKESVIK (2190) started up with a Torre Attack in which white spent four minutes for the first nine moves, while black spent 50 minutes. Following an early queen exchange on b3, white thanks to his a-file had a disturbing pressure. Running short of time and moves, Merkesvik without too much success tried to sacrifice a pawn at a5 in move 30.

Pavlovic of course succeeded running short of time again, but this time his position was much

better and his opponent even shorter on time. In the end black passed 40 moves with a margin of two seconds, only to stop the clocks two moves later.

2.0/3 for Pavlovic and 1.0/3 for Merkesvik follow the Swiss waves for both of them.



FM Sebastian MIHAJLOV (2335) as white in a Benoni opening against Daniel NORDQUELLE (2115) tried a positional set up with Nf3-Bf4-h3-e3. It worked out well as Nordquelle after some inaccuracies had to play Ne8, and struggled to get out his bishop from c8. In short black was in trouble before blundering his a-pawn at move 14; afterwards he was more or less lost.

Mihajlov later took his time, but despite reduced material won safely in an endgame with two bishops and a pawn for a rook. The 16 year old Norwegian junior champion has recovered well from his first round collapse, and following his second win is fully in the IM norm run.



Frode Urkedal

GM Torbjørn Ringdal HANSEN (2472) and IM Frode URKEDAL (2507) have for many years now played for the same team (SK 1911) in the Norwegian League.

Their game today still became a hard-fought six hours battle. The start was an English Four Knights line in which the queens were exchanged at f6, after which black despite his two f-pawns equalized. Chances later remained roughly balanced throughout a long endgame with rook, bishop, knight and five pawns on each side.

Ahead on the clock white continued to play for a win, and looked close as he finally won black's pawn on e4 after 74 moves. The board however was about to run out of pawns, and Urkedal continued to defend very well although he had less than half a minute left on the clock. In the end white painfully reached an endgame with knight and two pawns versus knight, only to realize it was still impossible to win due to black's active king and white's scattered pawns... Some kind of drama was reportedly in the air as Urkedal had less than 15 seconds left on the clock. But Ringdal Hansen, apparently looking only on the board, made one last honest try to win by sacrificing his knight to activate the king – and then offered a draw as it did not work out. Ringdal Hansen in short was nominated for a gentleman prize, but still failed to win a game. Urkedal has neither won any game, but won a nomination for the "longest try"-prize, as he for the third round in a row played the last game to finish.

Lucas RANALDI (2140) and WGM Anastasia GUTSKO (2177) started up with a Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line. Black played Ba6 to exchange one of white's bishops at d3, and balanced the chances on board and clock.

In the middle game white played e4 and f4 with some space advantage, but black demonstrated a good positional understanding and came up with enough counterplay on the queenside.

Leaving the rook on b3 after 26.Nd2 was a thematic exchange sacrifice from black – which white not should have accepted. Black's passed queenside pawns together with her active pieces won back a rook, leaving a rook and knight endgame in which only black had a knight.

After 45 moves, the position with rook, knight and four pawns versus rook and four of course was totally winning for black. Gutsko however cramped, first using too much time without finding any good plan – and then choosing a too demanding plan when running short of time. A comedy of errors started after 67 moves, as black become so eager to advance her passed b-pawn that she blundered her knight. Eager to get a repetition of moves, white in turn gave black two chances to save the knight. Gutsko chose the wrong square for her king when forcing Ranaldi to take the knight, and after rooks were exchanged the queen endgame with one versus two pawns should be a draw.

With 30 seconds left on each clock Gutsko however went on playing for a win. Just before 90 moves she overstretched by blundered into a queen exchange, after which white's g-pawn came ahead of black's e-pawn to the promotion square. Ranaldi suddenly had a won position with queen and king versus king and a pawn on e2, but trying to win it on the board he very nearly succeeded losing on time. The game was finally drawn after 99 moves, as two international arbiters watching the game finish agreed that white just managed to sacrifice his queen on the pawn before his final second disappeared...

Still pole out for Gutsko, while Ranaldi today definitely got back the half point he should have had yesterday.



The last board game between the talented Tromsø juniors Edit MACHLIK (2034) and Tor Fredrik KAASEN (2168) true enough ended up as a 30-move draw, but that outcome was everything but obvious.

Machlik felt tired in the morning, but tried to speed herself up with an aggressive King's Indian Four Pawns line. The position became very complicated as white realized a tactical e5-break, leaving white with a passed pawn on d5 and black with a disturbing pair of bishops. White due to his active knights had a strong initiative after 19.Nd6. Although creative, 19.--- Bxb2? was an unforced blunder from black. White correctly punished it by 22.Nxf5! Bxa1 23.Nxh6+, but then invited black into the game with 22.Nxf7? instead of 21.Rxf7+! or 21.Qxa1! with a win.

The tree of variations still was a very complex one, and white spent 22 of her remaining 27 minutes to find 23.Rf3!? with an ongoing attack. Black in turn spent 15 minutes to find a speculative move with 23.--- Qd4?!, after which 24.Qf1! (as planned by white) would have given white a decisive attack. Suddenly having less than two minutes left for 17 moves (!?), white in the end probably made a wise decision to play 24.Qc1?! – sacrificing a piece to force a perpetual check between g6 and h6.

All taken together, I think both Edit and Tor Fredrik very well deserved to get a score today.

Elo-group

The Open group neither had any player left at 100 % score after round three, as the first board game between Stein Thole Bjørnsen and Håkon Bentsen was a sound draw, while Tor Wetle Hoem on the second board lost against top rated FM Ward Al-Tabrosh. The top three rated players, Al-Tabrosh, Bentsen and Bjørnsen, are sharing the lead at 2.5/3 ahead eight players at 2.0. The open is still a very colorful and entertaining mix, including many upcoming young stars. No complaints accepted about the fighting spirit in this group during the first part of the double round, as all but two games got a winner in this morning session.



First board meeting between third rated Stein Tholo BJØRNSSEN (2019) and second rated Håkon BENTSEN (2037) was considered a key game, after both players had won their two first games. Stein today went for a positional Torre attack, and came slightly better in an isolated pawn position after black played c5. Some more or less sound exchanges later, white still was slightly better in the queen

and bishop endgame, and refused a draw offer after 21 moves.

White however found nothing better than exchanging queens to repair black's pawn structure, and offered a draw eight moves later in a very symmetric and drawish bishop endgame.

On the second board FM Ward AL-TARBOSH (2204) and Tor Wetle HOEM (2004) tested out a Sicilian with 3.Bb5+, in which white got a slight edge due to his better pawn structure.

The endgame with rook, knight and five pawns for white versus rook, bishop and five pawns for black probably was a draw. White, now having got the better pawn structure and the more active pieces, definitely had the much easier position to play.

Al-Tarbosh handled this endgame well, and his advantage grew as black in search for counterplay weakened his pawn structure further with 32.--- f5?!. Still the game was balancing on the edge between draw and win for white, until black at move 38 spent four of his remaining five minutes and then blundered his vital f5-pawn with 38.--- Bd8?. Realizing his mistake, Hoem immediately resigned the game after 39.Nd4+!.

Twelve year old Isak SJØBERG (1963) and 18 year old Alseit KIZATBAY (1905) on the third board played a Classical Sicilian, in which white's space gave him some advantage with two rooks, one bishop, one knight and seven pawns on each side.

Around move 30-40 black was in double trouble on both board and clock. As Alseit made his move 40 with five seconds left on the clock, white still had not found any breakthrough on the board.

A tactical Rxh7 definitely was among his winning ideas, but move 43 was not a good timing – as it then only helped black to exchange down to a drawish rook endgame...



Kai-Roger JOHANSEN (1997) in recent years has tried to compensate his lack of eyesight with an improved opening knowledge, and today came better as white in a long Slav duel against Jens Evang INGEBRETSEN (1710). Having established a space advantage, white first increased the positional pressure and then started picking up loose pawns.

Black's search for counterattack on the kingside turned out to be based upon non-working tactics, and so white after 32 moves won a forest of material. Probably a very good game by Kai-Roger – and hopefully a useful lecture for eleven year old Jens.



Twelve year old Bjørn ROBERTSEN (1893) and eleven year old Afras MANSOOR (1709) played a Bogó-Indian opening, in which black was fine after exchanging three sets of minor pieces. White's knight on e5 did not give him much without any supporting pieces around. Black however became too eager to

start a kingside attack when playing 24... Rh6?. White could – and did – coolly trap the other rook on f4 with 25.g3!. Robertsen afterwards efficiently cashed in the exchange, and returned it to reach a totally won pawn endgame at move 42.

Lars Martin KROGSETH (1599) versus Abyl KIZATBAY (1877) started up with a c3-Sicilian in which white realized e5 with a space advantage, but black due to his pair of bishops was fine in a loaded position.

Having castled long and started a kingside attack, black probably had control when white entered tactical complications with 17.Ng5 dxc3 18.Nf7.

23.Bxc5? was a tactical blow which would have worked out very well in case of 23... Qxc5?? 24.Qd8 mate, but which backfired all the more horribly as black instead played 23... Rb4-g4! – threatening both a mate on g2-h2 and the white queen on d2...

Lars Martin silently studied the position for a few minutes, and then gently allowed the mate by playing 24.Qd2xa5. Still aged twelve (until tomorrow!), Abyl seems to be a tactically gifted player in speedy progress.



The game between Olav ERIKSTAD (1821) and Ariza HINA (1364) was a King's gambit game which was more or less decided within "10 moves and 10 minutes". Black entered a knight sacrifice line with 4.-- Nxe5!? without knowing how black could force a draw if white took the knight, and was already lost as she after 8.Ng6+ replied with 8.--- Kd8? instead of 8.--- Ne7!.

Within a few more moves white was a piece

up in the endgame, and although the game lasted some 60 moves more it never really became exciting again.

Although Erikstad anyway was a favorite in this game, this was a strong candidate for the most successful preparation of today.

Leif Edwin WÆRSTAD (1572) and Lars Erik BROBAKKEN (1755) discussed a Queen's Indian position, in which Leif Edwin again played too passive with the white pieces.

Lars Erik by sound means came better, with active pieces and better pawn structure. Black went on to win a pawn in the middle game, but the endgame with rook, knight and five pawns versus rook, bishop and four pawns still appeared difficult to win. That was, until white at move 45 suddenly blundered his rook in one move and resigned the game.

77 year old Sturle HÅNES (1214) played another opponent who could have been his great-grandchild; this time he faced 15 year old Håkon Abeland MYRHEIM (1595). Black came much better from this Sicilian opening, as white's e5-pawn was fatally weak after the queens were exchanged. The minor piece endgame with bishop and five pawns against knight and six pawns from a white perspective was very difficult at best. As Håkon had picked up one more pawn, he was anyway winning when Sturle after 33 moves stumbled into a hopeless pawn endgame.

Ida LANDSVERK (1377) and Amalie Isabel MERKESVIK (1600) was the first game between two female players in this tournament, and became a hard-fought game. The start was a rare and Classical Ruy Lopez line with 3.--- Bc5, in which got a space advantage after realizing d4.

Ida for a long time made sound moves, and played for a win with an ambitious pawn storm on the kingside. As Amalie defended well and played much faster, Ida suddenly had to handle a double-edged position on the board with only four minutes left for ten minutes. Amalie used her chance to start counterplay on the white squares, and black anyway was winning when white blundered a rook at move 35 and resigned at move 36.

"Morning part" of a double round is considered the best round to get a walk over, hence 13 year old Mats Nærheim (1356) hopefully was not too dissatisfied to get it now. He and his competitors in the open group anyway returned for another exciting round after one lunchbreak – and before I managed to complete this report...