

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2020

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 8



### GM Group

First board meeting between GM Evgeny Postny and IM Kristian Stuvik Holm today was drawn within 20 moves and without (m)any dramatical moments. Second board meeting between IM Johannes Haug and GM Frode Urkedal lasted some 20 moves and one hour more, but also never seemed really close to winning chances for anyone. Fourth board game between GM Ilmars Starostits and FM Jens Ingebretsen surprisingly was a five-minute draw. In contrast GM Simen Agdestein won a convincing five-hour endgame on the third board and IM Frode Elsness won a four-hour attacking struggle on fifth board. Following this Postny and Urkedal are sharing the lead at 6,5/8, a full point ahead of Agdestein, Haug and Elsness.

Top board pairings for round nine following this will be Haug white against Postny, Urkedal white against Starostits and Elsness white against Agdestein. In short the fight for both first and third prize remains very exciting. For what it is worth, Urkedal will be white in the last round and his buchholz is slightly better than Postny's – but money prizes anyway will be shared in case of equal points. Most of the remaining norm candidates disappeared during round eight, but 16 year old Jens Ingebretsen and 15 year old Mathias Unneland following their draws today both can make IM-norms with a draw in the last round.

GM Evgeny Postny (2603) and IM Kristian Stuvik Holm (2465) discussed a Nimzo Indian Rubinstein line which was fairly balanced on the board and clock after 12 moves.

Postny for a change was not in the mood for a six-hour fight today, and the game a bit unexpectedly was drawn by a sound repetititon after 20 moves. Still it was a tense three-hour struggle.

Unbeaten Holm obviously is very hard to defeat, and Postny afterwards explained that he was unable to find any plans offering chances to win without wat too big risks of losing. Asked whether the position on second board affected his decision, Postny replied that he noted Haug was unlikely to lose – but whatever happened on second board it would not help him to find any winning plans from this position!



Postny vs Holm

On second board IM Johannes Haug (2481) spent a lot of time from the opening against GM Frode Urkedal (2549), despite playing a well known Ruy Lopez Berlin line. With e-pawns exchanged and all other pawns still on the board this line is known to be rather safe for white – and for black. Black had a slight initiative on the board and clock, but as white defended by sound means players exchanged down to a very drawish position with queen, knight and seven pawns on each side. Draw was agreed in an equal knight endgame shortly after the first time control. Failing to win this game Haug cannot make a GM norm this tournament, but he will continue his climb towards the 2500 mark whatever the result against Postny tomorrow. Urkedal with a performance close to 2700 has done much better than Postny from an Elo point of view, but still is only slightly ahead on buchholz points before the last round starts.



**Haug vs Urkedal**

GM Simen Agdestein (2552) as white against his former pupil FM Lucas Rナルdi (2334) went for an ambitious 4.a3!? in a Nimzo Indian opening. White this time got a pair of bishops and a space advantage due to this d5-pawn, without the traditional double c-pawn. The position however remained rather closed and black had a fine knight square at c5 plus some pressure against the white



**Agdestein vs Rナルdi**

pawn at c4. White lagged some 20 minutes behind on the clock from the opening, and sacrificing a pawn at c5 gave him only an approximately balanced position after black returned the pawn. The remaining endgame with two rooks, one knight and six pawns on each side appeared drawish. 24.--- Rb8? however was a dangerous strategic mistake from black, as white suddenly came much better after exchanging one rook and intervening in the b-file with the other one. Rナルdi according to Rナルdi overlooked that white by tactical means could play a4 followed by a5, making

all the difference as white's passed pawn later was very strong instead of rather weak. Rナルdi succeeded exchanging the last set of rooks, but it did not help much as the knight endgame also was lost due to white's passed pawn and more active king. Agdestein decided in instructive style by sacrificing his knight to get two passed pawns, and despite some blackouts can still make a top three prize if winning against IM Frode Elsness last round. A honest loss still was a loss for Rナルdi. Out for now as an IM norm candidate, he will still be closer to 2400 after this tournament than he was before it – unless losing against FM Gunnar Lund in the last round.

Fourth board meeting between GM Ilmars Starostits (2464) and FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2220) was drawn upon white's suggestion after nine moves, following a slow Queen's pawn opening in which black had no problems equalizing.

Ingebretsen needing 1,0/2 for an IM-norm for obvious reasons was well satisfied to draw as black against a GM, especially after losing a six-hour game yesterday. The GM felt tired after playing one five-hour game and three one-hour games yesterday, and was impressed by his opponent's play so far. Starostits will be in the podium as black against leading GM Frode Urkedal tomorrow, while Ingebretsen can make his second IM norm with a draw (or win) as white against FM Anders Hobber.



**Abdulrauf vs Elsness**

Unpredictable FM Elham Abdulrauf (2362) today played a Vienna opening with 1.e4 2.Nc3 3.Bc4 4.d3 and 5.f4!? as white against IM Frode Elsness (2454). Probably leaving the preparations very early, both players spent a lot of time before move 15. This opening experiment can hardly be declared successful from a white point of view, as black was slightly better after three sets of minor pieces were exchanged. Black's advantage grew as white for unknown reasons did not want to exchange at d5 on move 16, instead letting black exchange at e4 with a further weakening of the white pawn

structure. Black won the white e4-pawn within a few more moves. When white won back the pawn a few moves later on, black due to his seventh rank rook had a winning attack in a heavy-weight position with one queen, two rooks and five pawns on each side.

Short of time both players made some understandable inaccuracies before 40 moves:

Black objectively speaking was wrong to exchange one set of rooks as f1, but as white afterwards did not find out how his king could walk around on the water, black still got a winning attack. With his king stumbling in thin air at h4, white anyway was lost when blundering his rook at move 40.

Elsness is slightly above expected score and in the fight for third prize before entering the ring as white against GM Simen Agdestein tomorrow, while Abdulrauf will try to limit his Elo deficit as black against FM Noam Vitenberg.

The junior duel between IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2386) and FM Trygve Dahl (2211) reportedly was a Sicilian Paulsen line. Black played some kind of hedgehog set up with e6-e6-a6-b6 – but then suddenly accelerated on the flank with 11.--- h5. White first played ambitiously for a win with a f4-f5-advance, but instead of hitting in at e6 he at move 13 strangely returned the knight from d4 to f3. Black at move 19 could reach a balanced and sound position if taking back at e5 with his knight, but instead destroyed his pawn structure by 19.--- dxe5!? to play for an attack. Black got his reward as he a few moves later planted a rook at d4, and reached a promising attack with an improved structure after white exchanged the rook. Black still had a pressure in the following endgame with queen, bishop and six pawns against queen, knight and six pawns.

While Kaasen defended well with less than a minute left on the clock, Dahl failed to test the most critical lines. White then was able to exchange the black bishop and reach a dead drawn queen endgame. No norm chances in round nine for Dahl either, but despite his first round loss he has succeeded to reach a performance above 2350 before his last round duel against IM Benjamin Haldorsen.

FM Anders Hobber (2386) versus Mathias Unneland (2149) was a key game for the norm chances of both players. Hobber desperately needed a win, but still went slow on both the clock and the board with a rather patient London system.

Half an hour behind on the clock white still came ahead on the board in the early middle game after black first weakened his kingside with f6 and g6 and then castled short. Hobber however spent a lot of time and found nothing better than exchanges, leaving black with d-file and the more active pieces around move 25-30. Unneland played for a win on the board while Hobber ran seriously short of time in the fourth hour.

With pawns on both wings black had sound pressure in the endgame with rook, bishop and five pawns against rook, knight and five pawns. Offering to exchange the bishop for a knight with 39.---Bd6+? however took the remaining sting out of the position, and a draw was agreed in a boring rook endgame a few moves later on.

Hobber following this draw still has a performance just below 2450, but is without any chances for an IM-norm because of his round four walk over draw. 15 year old sensation man Unneland on the other hand has kept up his speed remarkably well, and can make a sensational IM-norm with a draw (or win) as white against IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen tomorrow.



**Hobber vs Unneland**

GM Benjamin Arvola Notkevich (2482) versus Ludvig Carlsson (2281) was a game both players needed to win: Arvola to keep any prize chances and Carlsson to keep any norm chances.

An apparently slow Ruy Lopez line accelerated as white pseudo-sacrificed a bishop with 9.Bxf7+. White came a pawn up after winning back the piece at d4, and although black appeared to have the longer preparation his compensation soon vanished. Due to his pawn at d5 and a strong knight square at c4, white after 18 moves was a sound pawn up with the better pieces. Arvola soon reorganized his pieces for a direct kingside attack, and due to his monster bishop at b2 he could elegantly sacrifice his queen at g7 to mate with the rooks and bishop after 30 moves. The game result reduced somewhat both Notkevich's loss and Carlsson's gain for this tournament, although both are still notable.



**Notkevich vs Carlsson**

IM Benjamin Haldorsen (2469) versus Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2048) was a French Winawer duel in which black greedily snatched a pawn at a3 with his queen. White due to his advanced kingside pawns and pair of bishops had more than enough compensation, and after 16 moves was half an hour ahead on the clock. White's promising position however was ruined within three moves around move 24-26, as he first helpfully exchanged queens on black's premises and then even more helpfully blundered an exchange. The endgame with two rooks, bishop and four pawns against rook, bishop, knight and four pawns still remained complicated, as white had a disturbing knight on d6 and a four against two majority on the kingside. Due to his passed pawn at e5 and active pieces, white after 39 moves had achieved enough counterplay for a draw with rook, knight, bishop and two pawns against two rooks, bishop and two pawns.

Short of time and for sure frustrated to have wasted a won position, black blundered it all away at move 40 – allowing white to play 41.e6! followed by 42.Nf7 with a decisive attack against the black king at h8. Øye-Strømberg remarkably has won more than 60 Elo points in this tournament despite having wasted several won positions. Haldorsen on the other hand is below expected score despite several pole in wins.

Ambitious juniors Tobias Lang Nilsen (2146) and FM Noam Vitenberg (2298) meanwhile discussed a rare Caro-Kann line with an early c5, in which white first got pressure against black's isolated d-pawn and then won a pawn at a7. Taking the pawn however might have been inaccurate as the knight on a7 was left out of play for some moves. Winning back the pawn at a4 on the other hand was too greedy from black, as white afterwards got dominating pieces and a strong pressure against black's backward d6 pawn. Black was in trouble when forced to sacrifice the pawn around move 25-29.

As white failed to find the most critical moves, black still succeeded winning back the pawn just in time when it reached d7. The remaining position with one queen, one rook, one bishop and four pawns on each side appeared very drawish, although black still played on some 50 moves before the last stop for this game became a dead drawn bishop endgame.

17 year old Lang Nilsen has won a lot of Elo without making any headlines this tournament, while Vitenberg is now «only» half a point above expected score before last round.

Dion Krivenko (2047) versus IM Timofey Galinsky (2370) was a very rare French opening line in which white played 2.b3 and 6.Qh5. Black first appeared fine, but he had to weaken his kingside, and white came better after establishing a space advantage with e5 and d4.

23.--- Nc5? was a careless blunder from black, allowing white to create a decisive attack with a tactical 24.f5!

Black following this lost an exchange, and within a few moves drifted into a rather hopeless endgame with rook, knight and four pawns versus two rooks and four pawns.

While black in the fourth hour created some counterplay due to his passed pawn at d3, white failed to find a good coordination with his rooks and wasted most of his advantage. Krivenko after 55 moves found no better plan than sacrificing a rook for the black knight and d3-pawn.



**Krivenko vs Galinsky**

Although Krivenko had only four minutes against 45, he following an inaccurate move from black still was notably better when offering a draw at move 59. Galinsky limited his Elo loss by this miraculous endgame save, while 14 year old Krivenko has won more than 50 Elo points at Fagernes despite today's half wasted chance.

Afras Mansoor (2117) as white against GM Normunds Miezis (2485) went for a symmetrical English fianchetto. Black came some 25 minutes ahead on the clock from the opening, but probably played too fast – as white due to his queenside space advantage and knight outpost at d5 came better into the middle game. Black however came up with counterplay on the kingside, and his f-file attack turned out to be more important than white's extra pawn at b5. Miezis in the fourth hour efficiently won an exchange plus two pawns, and of course had no problems winning the endgame with two rooks and five pawns against rook, bishop and four pawns. Mansoor despite this is well above and Miezis well below expected score.



**Lund vs Tenold**

FM Gunnar Lund (2302) and Andreas Tenold (1935) discussed a exotic Sicilian line with 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.b3 b6 4.Bd3 Bb7, later normalizing to an open position in which white's bishop at b2 and knight on e5 gave a pleasant initiative. 20 minutes ahead on the clock, white could be well satisfied after 15 moves. As Tenold ran short of time in a crumbling position, Lund efficiently switched to a direct kingside attack. White's attack turned winning as he was allowed to destroy black's kingside pawn shelter by capturing at f6 after 20 moves. Black succeeded

exchanging queens, but still not to stop the attack, hence white won decisive material before 30 moves. Lund following a jumpy tournament seems likely to land just around his expected score, while Tenold still is well above his low expected score.

Gustav Törngren (2185) gave his slow Old Indian in Advance another try, playing 1.d3 2.Nf3 3.e4 4.c3 as white against Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2174). Black equalized by a sound e5 and d5, but white came better after black helpfully exchanged at e4 to open the d-file for the white rook. While black failed to find any counterplay white increased the pressure by an instructive h4-h5-Ng6+ maneuver, and still in an inspired mood he crashed through by a knight sacrifice at h6 a few moves later on. Kvaløy is around expected score and Törngren well above before the last round.

Andreas Skotheim (2120) as white against IM Mats Vestby-Ellingsen (2362) entered a Four Knights opening, but then broke the symmetry by exchanging his light-squared bishop for one of the knights at c6. Chances remained fairly balanced as white's f4-advance later only resulted in a lot of exchanges. White however spent enormous amounts of time and after 16 moves was 50 minutes behind his opponent, with only some 30 minutes left. Some excitement followed as white helped black to establish a passed pawn at a3: First black was reported better because he had a passed pawn, and then white was reported better because he had won black's passed pawn.

Although white played with knight and five pawns versus bishop and four, black probably was closer to something as white had his knight stuck on b1 and his king stuck on h2. Trying to release his knight, white actually blundered when playing 49.b4?. As none of the players noted the winning 49... Bf5!, white succeeded freeing his knight for the cost of a pawn, and the game was agreed drawn a few moves later on. Questions before last round remains how much Elo Skotheim will win and how much Vestby-Ellingsen will lose.



**Dolzhikova vs Sørensen**

WGM Olga Dolzhikova (2208) as white against Simen Sørensen (2047) unexpectedly played a close to normal Sicilian position, and got a pleasant advantage due to her bishop at d6 and pressure against black's e6 pawn. Having efficiently centralized her pieces white got a very strong initiative, which should have given her more than one pawn and a lot of exchanges. White however still came a passed pawn up in the remaining position with queen and two rooks left on each side, and probably was winning all of the time in the rook endgame. Sørensen is around his expected score despite

this loss, and Dolzhikova struggling to stay above 2200 despite this win.

13 year old Sergey Eliseev (2025) as white against Shazil Shehzad (2188) went for a positional Reti opening – and then started to spend a lot of time. Black first appeared healthy, but white came better as black strangely blocked his own bishop at c8 by placing the queen at d7.



**Eliseev vs Shehzad**

Eliseev used the chance to pick up a pawn at a7 with his knight, as he now could exchange the knight for a bishop at c8 afterwards. Consequently, white although half an hour behind on the clock was better on the board with an extra pawn and a pair of bishops. The remaining rooks and bishop endgame after 35 moves was a safe win for white, as he was a pawn up and soon would win another one at c5. Sacrificing the bishop to reach e2 with his passed pawn in this situation was a good practical try from Shehzad, but Eliseev confidently controlled the e1 square with his bishop while hunting the black king with his rooks. Unpredictable and still undrawn Shazil Shehzad will lose some Elo this tournament, while the question for Eliseev is whether he can pass 2100.

FM André Nielsen (2218) as white against Sigve Hølleland (2133) entered a Classic Sicilian position and then castled long. Hølleland again backfired with his sacrifice of the d6 pawn, as 14.Bh5! threatening 15.Qxe6+! would have been winning. Nielsen instead went for a more thematic but much less clear knight sacrifice at d5. Although black's king at d8 looked a bit scared, the d-file was blocked by white's d5-pawn and black after 19 moves had consolidated with one bishop for two pawns. White won one more pawn, but practically lost the game when forcing himself to exchange queens, as black due to his strong bishop and b-file attack was totally winning in the rooks and bishop endgame. Towards the end of a depressive tournament, Nielsen ended this game with a depressive rook endgame in which his opponent had an extra rook. Hølleland despite many waves will make a plus out of this, while Nielsen is drowning everytime he try to do surfing this week.



**Nielsen vs Hølleland**

Aleksander Fossan (2171) versus Sander Fuglestein (2109) was a Caro-Kann Panno duel in which the isolated pawn position appeared fairly balanced after 16 moves. White with an isolated pawn at d4 lagged half an hour behind on the clock. The game was agreed a draw five moves later on, still in a fairly balanced position. Both players are doomed to lose some Elo and looked a bit disillusioned



**Skaslien vs Brodtkorb**

Ingrid Skaslien (1976) first came slightly better as white against Lars Johan Brodtkorb (2166) in a rather tame Queen's Gambit exchange line. 13.Nf4? however was a misunderstood plan, as black could exchange two sets of minor pieces and get the better pawn structure. Brodtkorb for a change played much faster than his opponent and after 18 moves was 50 minutes ahead on the clock with a promising advantage on the board. 19.--- Qb4? was a strange derailment, as the kingside now definitely was the battlefield, but Skaslien in turn helpfully gave

up the e-file. The game later was in shaky balance until white took over the e-file with her queen and got some pressure just before 40 moves. Exchanging queens was a natural plan for black, but as he afterwards was helpful giving white a passed pawn at f5, the minor pieces endgame in the fifth hour balanced at the edge between win for white and a draw. Draw agreed after 70 moves with very few minutes left on both clocks – as Skaslien unwilling to run any risks had given Brodtkorb the help to build a fortress in an same-coloured bishop endgame. Skaslien has been playing much better this tournament and with a performance above 2100 so far she is likely to bring her Elo back above 2000, while Brodtkorb has been too shaky and is struggling to stay above 2150.



Håkon Bentsen (2120) and Sigurd Loe Grøver (2145) for some 30 moves had a theory discussion about a French Tarrasch line in which tactical complications led to a drawish endgame with rook, bishop and five pawns against two rooks and three pawns. The final endgame with bishop, a-pawn and b-pawn versus rook and a-pawn should have been a fortress draw, but unwilling to accept that black played on. Reportedly mixing up the order of two moves in a planned variation, he suddenly dropped the rook on a square where it could be taken by the white king. Nothing will work for Grøver this tournament, while Bentsen actually has a score slightly above expected following this lucky win.



**Bentsen - Grøver**

Monika Machlik (2082) as white in a Classical Nimzo Indian against FM Richard Bjerke (2144) today lagged some 45 minutes behind on the clock. Bjerke's early g5 reportedly was fine, but backfired badly as he returned his knight to a passive position at f6 instead of putting pressure on white with 15... Nf4!. Following this white soon got a close to winning initiative, as black had weakened his kingside and entered an unpleasant d-file pin. White in turn slowed down by castling at move 20, when opening the h-file with 20.h4! would have given a very strong attack. Although white kept an initiative, black successfully exchanged down to a drawish endgame with one bishop, one knight and six pawns on each side. Bjerke however underestimated the dangers when he played 37... Ne5?, giving white the opportunity to exchange the bishop for a knight and escape the opposite-coloured bishop situation. Machlik used her chance and after 40 moves was better with knight and six pawns against bishop and six pawns. This still should have been a draw, but Bjerke under pressure failed to find the accurate plan and definitely lost it as he did not block the inroutes for the white king with 43... e5!. White used her chance to play 44.Kf4 and within a few moves won both the black kingside pawns. Machlik following this will win a few Elo points even if losing in round nine, while Bjerke will lose many points even if winning then.

Pål Røyset (2150) versus Sondre Melaa (2210) was a Scandinavian opening in which black postponed his development to start an ambitious pawn storm on the kingside. White after 12 moves went for a tempting knight sacrifice at f7, and got two pawns and a dangerous e-file attack for the piece. Within a few moves white won a third pawn at c5 while black struggled to develop his queenside. A critical moment came at move 22 as white saw the idea of releasing the e5 square and win the queen with a Ne6+ fork, but played the slow 22.Re6-e5? instead of the instantly winning 22.Rxf6!. As black got the one tempo needed to evacuate his king from f8 to g8 without losing some piece, he suddenly was winning due to his material advantage a few moves later on. Røyset sacrificed an exchange into the air and then made a creative try to play an endgame with bishop and seven pawns against rook, knight against rook and three pawns, but nothing works out for him this week.

Thyra Kvendseth (2017) and Hallvard Haug Flatebø (1877) made a slow start with a Queen's pawn fianchetto, later transposing into some Grünfeld Indian fianchetto relative in which white had a slight space advantage.

15.e6?! was a loose pawn sacrifice from white, and a few exchanges later she won back the pawn with an approximately balanced position. White around move 24 established some pressure against the black backward pawn at c6, but 24.b5? was a grave strategical mistake as black had no problems after freeing himself with 24... c5!

Kvendseth however managed to reset herself and again played better than her opponent later on. White in short won the d5 pawn and then exchanged down to a rook and knight endgame which was close to winning even before black in desperation gave up his knight for two pawns. Kvendseth still needs a last round win to make a plus result out of this, while last-hour substitute Flatebø in this GM group remains the man crushed by no one and still defeated by everyone.



**Kvendseth vs Flatebø**

# Open Group

In the Open the second last round changed a lot and further increased the tension for the top three prizes, as both first placed Sverre Lye (1799) and second placed Mikkel Lien (1677) lost. Lye's fall on the first board came unexpected as he was much better from the Sicilian opening as white against Elias Hestvik (1893), and could have been a very sound pawn up in the endgame if just taking a pawn at d6 after 20 moves. Instead white first invited black to activate his pieces and then just blundered his knight by overlooking a neonlight blinking pin in the f-file. Second rated Hestvik efficiently used his chance at the first board and after all is in the fight for the top three prizes.



**Sverre Lye**

Mikkel Lien as white against eleven year old Louis Khoo-Thwe (1835) on the second board was somewhat better until blundering his key center pawn to a tactical 19.--- Nxe4!. Afterwards he looked all the more disillusioned and without many protests drifted into a hopeless endgame.

As former leader Brage Modell (1844) had to withdraw after the pairings of round eight were published, his opponent Jamie Cross (1711) got a full point for free on board three.

The fourth board meeting between Mathias Lind Schouten (1822) and Andreas Skrede Hausken (1823) was a lively and double-edged Sicilian duel with many active bishops – until black blundered one of them in an e-file pin. 15 year old Schouten of course later had full control in a rook and bishop endgame in which only he had a bishop.

First rated Terje Lund (2104) is in the fight for top five as he won a convincing positional win as white against ten year old super talent Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1678) on the fifth board, while the young lions Sivert Ihlen (1871) and Misha Galinsky (1876) on board seven are too far behind following a long and hard fought internal draw today.



**Berg vs Johannes Melkevik**

Johannes Melkevik (1858) will get one last chance on the top five boards as he hit back with a powerful attacking win today, and so will Olav Erikstad (1736) as he today made an inspired win out of a promising endgame.

The lower boards today had many hard fought and entertaining games, but in the end (surprisingly) no very surprising results.

Following this we look forward to a thrilling last round in the Open: 13 year old Sverre Lye is leading alone at 6,5/8, but now only half a point ahead of Lien, Khoo-Thwe, Cross, Schouten and Hestvik! The three players qualifying for next year's GM group almost certainly will be found within this group of six players, neither Lund, Melkevik and Erikstad at 5,5/8 should have sufficient buchholz in case of many players at 6,5/9.

Top board pairings for round nine will be Khoo-Thwe white against Lye, Hestvik white against Cross, Schouten white against Lien, Melkevik white against Lund and Erikstad white against Ihlen.

Sverre Lye is still favourite for the first prize, but can also drop out of top three if losing – while anyone able to win on the top three boards will be guaranteed a place in the next GM-group!

**All photos by Malgorzata Kopaczek-Styczen**