

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2021

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 2



### GM Group

Many more draws were seen on the top boards today, as players from the first half of the ELO list now had to play against each other. The top rated GMs had another successful day as first rated GM Vahap Sanal and fourth rated GM Tiger Hillarp Persson both won nice attacking games as white against German IMs.

Second rated GM Frode Urkedal had a harder test as black against IM Marsel Efroimsky, but succeeded squeezing a win out of a drawish rook endgame. GM Titas Stremavicius had to work six hours, but in the end succeeded winning a jumpy endgame.

The two other players at 2/2 in the GM group are GM Stellan Brynell and IM Frode Elsness, both winning in a more or less convincing style as white against lower rated junior opponents today. Notably third rated GM Vitaly Kunin now have arrived, and winning a violent attacking game he can be found in a big messy crowd of 17 players at 1,5/2 before the double round tomorrow.

Top rated **GM Vahap Sanal (2585)** looked much more confident as white against **IM Julian Martin (2396)** in the second round. White came some 40 minutes ahead on the clock with a sound space advantage on the board in a Sicilian Maroczy duel. Later white instructively first exchanged off the dark squared bishops, and then avoided an exchange of queens. While the black rooks remained more or less paralyzed, white soon opened the kingside for his rooks to complete the attack. Fairly illustrating for this game, white had 46 minutes and black 34 seconds left on the clock in the final position after 33 moves.

**IM Marsel Efroimski (2417)** and **GM Frode Urkedal (2564)** meanwhile discussed a rare and closed Ruy Lopez position, with the black bishop placed slightly awkward in front of a pawn on d6. Efroimski appeared to have made the better opening preparation. White suddenly accelerated on the kingside with g4–g5–gxh6, and had a promising attacking position after 15.Qh5. Although natural, 16.Nd5? was a mistake allowing black to reorganize his pieces with counterplay on the kingside and then exchange the queens.



Reigning Fagernes champion Urkedal

Although white was a pawn up, black later had an easier position to play due to his pair of bishops and active rooks. Efroimski for a long while defended well, and the rook endgame with two pawns on each side was considered «probably drawish» after the first time control. Passed h-pawn and more active king still gave black good practical chances.

Urkedal got the help needed to exchange the remaining kingside pawns and cross over to the queenside with his king, after which black's passed c-pawn soon decided.

**GM Tiger Hillarp Persson (2521)** versus **IM Christian Köpke (2346)** started up with a Benkö Gambit, in which black got the more active pieces for free as white did not take the pawn. The dynamic Tiger however again made the better decisions in the middle game, and as black went for a badly timed d5-break, white could play e5–e6–exf7+ with an attack.

Both players came under time pressure with only five minutes left on the clock after 20 moves, but white had the easier position to play and completed his attack to win about a ton of material within 10 more moves.



Blomqvist vs Juksta (front) and Köpke vs Hillarp Persson (back)

**FM Karolis Juksta (2397)** and **GM Erik Blomqvist (2518)** tested out an Accepted Queen's Gambit line in which queens are exchanged on d8 before 10 moves, leaving a symmetric and rather drawish pawn structure. As white played too slowly and failed to put any pressure on black, the GM could disrupt white's pawn structure by Bxf3 and be slightly better after 20 moves.

Juksta however started defending well when he had to, and the game dried out with a repetition in a drawish rook and knight endgame just before the time control.

**GM Kaido Kulaots (2511)** versus **FM Theodor Kenneskog (2309)** was an open Catalan opening in which white regained the pawn at c4. As black got the time needed to transfer his troublesome light squared bishop around to c6, he still was fine from the opening. White held a very slight initiative all into a double knight endgame, but black defended by sound means and the game was drawn by a repetition after 46 moves.

**IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2375)** versus **GM Alon Greenfeld (2509)** was another fairly balanced Sicilian opening with a solid Maroczy set up. The position moved closer to a draw as all the center pawns were exchanged before 20 moves, although black due to his c-file possession and more active pieces kept a slight initiative with rook, bishop, knight and five pawns left on each side after 25 moves. Black first snatched a pawn at b3 in move 30, but then suddenly offered a draw the very next move – as white was about to win back the pawn at g5 with a very drawish position.

Lithuanian **GM Titas Stremavicius (2487)** today played 1.f4 and went for a Dutch in advance against **FM Øystein Bøyum Fossum (2302)**. Black was healthy from the opening, but a tense struggle followed as white marched forward with his pawns on the kingside while black advanced on the queenside. Black for a while appeared equal if not better in a heavyweight position, with all 32 pieces still in play after 22 moves. White however made the better calculations when the position finally opened in the fourth hour. After the first time control he was close to winning in an endgame with rook, bishop and four pawns against rook, knight and three pawns.

The GM in turn lost the thread in the fifth hour, sacrificing back a pawn without finding any way to advance his two passed queenside pawns afterwards. Early in the sixth hour black was forced to sacrifice a piece to destroy white's queenside pawns, but the remaining endgame with rook and three pawns versus rook, bishop and h-pawn still was reported «close to a draw». A practical test of the drawn endgame with rook and bishop versus rook was considered likely.

Following some inaccuracies from white and some more inaccuracies from black, white however succeeded picking up all the black pawns while saving his h-pawn. Although the game lasted 103 moves and more than six hours, the rest was a walk in the park for the GM as his dark squared bishop controlled the promotion square on h8.

**FM Elham Abdrlauf (2334)** vs **GM Normunds Miezis (2467)** started up as some kind of half open Sicilian, reaching a symmetric pawn structure with e4 versus e5 after the d-pawns disappeared. White might have been slightly better after 20 moves, although the position was demanding to play for both sides.

Black in the fourth hour started a kingside attack and eventually won a pawn on h3, but later found no way to avoid a mass slaughter of the rooks. Although black still was a pawn up, white's active queen gave him a draw without many nervous moments in the queen and bishop endgame. Abdrlauf still played remarkably fast and confident in a far from trivial endgame, and so far walks steady around on the water.



**Miezis vs Abdrlauf**



**IM Frode Elsness (2465)** came ahead on the clock as white against **Tobias Lang Nilsen (2271)**, while the board was a messy Benoni position in which white played hardball with e4–f4–f5–e5. A tense struggle followed early in the fourth hour, as black succeeded activating his king and getting some counterplay against the scattered white pawns.

With both players running short of time Elsness however made the much better calculations between move 35 and 40, and having advanced his passed pawn to d7 he after exchanging the queens had a trivial win in the endgame with rook and knight versus rook and bishop.

This might be the right moment to mention that Elsness has been above 2500 and has made two GM-norms, hence a third norm now will complete the GM title which he has been hunting for some 20 years now.

**FM Noam Vitenberg (2305)** versus **IM Jung Min Seo (2456)** started up like a classical Queen's Gambit exchange line, but became much less traditional as white disrupted his pawn structure by allowing black to exchange off the dark squared bishops at f4.

The position probably was in some kind of dynamic balance after 13 moves, when black had spent some 40 minutes and white more than one hour on the board. Later white lagged behind on the clock, but succeeded first to weaken black's kingside shelter and then to win a pawn by a tactical Nxb5.

White after 30 moves had a winning position with an extra pawn and a promising attack, but seriously short of time he later failed to complete the attack. After 40 moves black had succeeded doubling his bishop and queen in the long diagonal a8–h1, with disturbing counterthreats against the white king on g1. White following this was forced to draw the game by a perpetual check.

**GM Gudmundur Kjartansson (2433)** went for a rather dry double fianchetto with white against **Shazil Shehzad (2249)**. He established a queenside space advantage when playing c5, but black soon hit back in the center with his thematic e5-break.

Tactical exchanges before 20 moves left white with a pair of bishops, although black with his protected knight on c4 still looked fine.

Complications followed as white got the chance to win a pawn at g7, but suddenly found himself in danger of losing as he had no way to continue his attack with the queen left offside at h6. Black reportedly was close to winning before he missed a tactical 30.Qg5!, forcing a queen exchange.

White later was two pawns up for some moves, but having three against one pawn on the kingside he still had a hard time to win the rook and bishop endgame due to opposite coloured bishops. Kjartansson creatively sacrificed his bishop, but still ended up in a dead drawn rook endgame after the first time control.



Shehzad vs Kjartansson

**FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2274)** went for a patient Bd2-line as white in a Grünfeld-Indian against **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2432)**. After the dark-squared bishops were exchanged, black successfully sacrificed a pawn at c5 to open the position against white's king at e1. White escaped dangers of a mating attack by exchanging the queens, but black kept a strong initiative afterwards. The bishop and knight endgame with an extra pawn first was close to winning for black. Exchanging one of the pieces however was a serious misunderstanding from black, and following a nice tactical trick white could win the black pawn at b7. White's passed pawn on b6 later gave him enough counterplay to save the draw with bishop and three pawns against knight and four pawns.



Ingebretsen vs Kaasen (front) and Brynell vs Lye (back)

**GM Stellan Brynell (2431)** chose a positional line with 3.Bb5 as his weapon against the Sicilian opening of underrated young **Sverre Lye (1858)**. It worked out fairly well from a white point of view, as white after playing d4–d5 got a space advantage and an outpost on e6 for his knight. Black on the other hand had a long diagonal for his fianchetto bishop at h8 and got some counterplay after the f5 break. As white intervened with his knight on e6 at move 19, black reportedly could have had interesting counterplay if sacrificing an exchange on f8. Instead moving the rook away from the kingside he soon found himself in hot water, and the GM efficiently opened up the kingside to complete the attack against black's all the more lonely king before 40 moves. Brynell became so happy reaching 2/2 that he immediately gave up his first half point by requesting a walk over draw for round three.

Third rated **GM Vitalij Kunin (2547)** arrived Fagernes as planned with the bus 13.30, and following a short lunchbreak was ready to play white against **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (1945)** at 14.00. The opening was a closed King's Indian in which white established a substantial space advantage with c4–d5–e4. Black's search for counterplay with an f5-break was understandable, but still dubious as white after castling long came a pawn up with an ongoing kingside attack. Black's defending task became even more difficult because he lagged one hour behind on the clock, and white smashed through on the kingside after 30 moves. Westrum if he ever left following his surprising first round win is well back on earth now, while Kunin despite his late arrival definitely is here to fight for the top prizes.

**Christian Grundekjøn (2102)** as white against **FM Conor Murphy (2428)** went for a patient and slow Reti set up, allowing black to establish a space advantage by d5–d4 followed by e5.

Black was fine if not better after 14 moves, but exchanging his d4-pawn for the black pawn at b4 afterwards was an unconventional decision leading to a rather unclear position. Young Murphy seems to be a very patient and stubborn Irishman, and again fought on



**Murphy vs Grundekjøn**

well into the sixth hour in a very drawish endgame. This time it was a double bishop endgame with four pawns on each side. Grundekjøn defended with sound moves, and still had more than ten minutes left on the clock when Murphy from 60 moves had less than a minute left on the clock. A few moves later white could force a draw by sacrificing his bishop, as black had left only the classical and unfortunate combination of a h-pawn and a dark squared bishop.

**Sigurd Grøver (2105)** and **IM Robert Baskin (2398)** discussed some strange and modern Bb4-line of a Queen's Gambit / Ragozin, in which black went for active counterplay with c5 and g5. The position became even more messy as black after 17 moves snatched a pawn at a2. Black remained up a pawn most of the middle game, but due to white's active pieces had a hard time to make any use of it. During mutual time pressure white after 35 moves invited to a draw by repetition. Unwilling to accept a draw against a much lower rated opponent with a pawn more, Baskin instead blundered his knight and resigned as white efficiently inserted the key check on e8 and then took the knight on c4. Baskin was obviously very frustrated by his own play, but still very sportily congratulated his opponent with the game win.

30 year old Grøver was before the pandemic break considered as a clearly underrated master player, but of course now still is a sensation man at 1,5/2 after defeating an IM.



The junior duel between **Andreas Tenold (1995)** and **Ludvig Carlsson (2374)** was a somewhat shaky Sämisch battle of a King's Indian opening. Although thematic, black's decision to sacrifice a bishop for two pawns at g4 was dubious. Black with an octopus knight on e3 came up with some counterplay against white's king on c1, but white had a kingside attack running and due to his extra piece still was much better around move 22.

Sacrificing back the piece with 23.Bf6?? however was a strange and decisive blunder from white. True enough he afterwards won the black queen for rook and knight, but black's two active rooks and knight combined with a pawn armada soon overwhelmed white's queen and rook in the endgame.

**IM Erlend Mikalsen (2373)** as white against **Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1995)** entered an Italian opening, but although black lagged behind on the clock he first did fine on the board. White kept a slight initiative, but black had a solid position in the rooks and knight endgame after succeeding to exchange off the queens in move 28. White however later got the help needed to open the position for his pieces, and in the fifth hour white suddenly had a dangerous attack.



Mikalsen vs Rasmussen

Sacrificing the d-pawn actually was a brilliant plan from white, but still it did not work out as he stopped to take back the pawn instead of continuing the attack. Rasmussen later defended very well and after 70 moves had sacrificed his knight to get rid of the remaining white pawns, leaving a pawnless endgame with rook versus rook and knight.

Mikalsen found himself one hour ahead and one piece up, but without any pawns left to promote. He understandably played it all out but still got nowhere. Rasmussen continues his successful suffering in the endgames, and after 120 moves could demand another well deserved draw due to the 50-move rule.

**FM Fredrik Lindh (2296)** versus **Emils Mierins (2057)** was an open Sicilian duel, in which white early in the middle game accelerated with b5 and e5. As black failed to find the critical replies, white after 20 moves had a dangerous attack coming up. As black still failed to find the best defence moves, white in an inspired mood sacrificed a bishop on h7 and after 27 moves had introduced decisive threats against black's king on f7.

**Gustav Törnngren (2197)** and **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1936)** both entered the GM group from round two, carrying a walk over draw from round one. Their game started with a Queen's Indian line in which white sacrificed his pawn at d5 to open the position. White got an initiative soon turning into a direct attack, as black failed to evacuate his king from e8 in time. Black respectfully resigned two pawns up at move 17, realizing that too heavy artillery were lining up against his king now stuck in the shooting range on d8.

The teenager duel between **Lauris Perkampus (2076)** and **Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2275)** started up like a Classical Nimzo Indian, in which black's active pair of knights were more active than white's pair of bishops. Black however was too helpful exchanging off his active minor pieces, leaving after 24 moves a fairly balanced position with queen, two rooks and four pawns on each side.

25.f4!? was a brave and risky defence from white as black could reply with a tactical 25... Qxf4!? due to white's vulnerable first rank.

Perkampus later made an inaccuracy, after which the flashy 27... Qc4! could have saved the extra pawn with some winning chances for white. As black overlooked this chance he had to return the pawn, and a draw was agreed in a balanced position three moves later on.



Dahl vs Øye-Strømberg

**FM Trygve Dahl (2249)** versus **Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2111)** was a duel between two talented young teammates from Trøndelag. The opening was a Pirc in which black became too careful, allowing white to establish a promising space advantage with d5. The tide turned as black after castling got all the help needed to exchange all the minor pieces and start a counterattack on the kingside. White however just in time found some counterplay in the center with 27.e5!. As black under time pressure exchanged down to a difficult rook endgame, white due to his active king still won in the fifth hour.

**Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2084)** as white against **FM Volker Seifert (2246)** went for a Reti fianchetto, allowing black to take over the center with d5-d4-e5. White's search for counterplay on the kingside turned out only to weaken his own king, and after 25 moves black had an extra pawn at d4 with an ongoing kingside attack. Seifert again pushed his passed d-pawn aggressively forward, this time with much more success as he during mutual time pressure could sacrifice an exchange to win a rook.



**FM Mathias Unneland (2228)** versus **FM Richard Bjerke (2102)** was a fascinating generation duel, with an age difference of nearly 50 years.

Bjerke today went for a Dutch Stonewall and succeeded more or less to balance the chances after exchanging the queens. Black however mixed up something when trying to open up the kingside afterwards, as white after 35 moves had an extra h-pawn and a clear advantage. Opening the c-file with 39.--- cxd4? might have been the decisive mistake from a black point of view, as white within a few more moves intervened with his rooks and created decisive threats against the black king.



**Bjerke vs Unneland**

**Christian Tunge (2044)** versus **Vladan Nikolic (2216)** was another Reti or English fianchetto relative, in which black for free established a center advantage with d5–d4–e5. Although tempting, the e4-break might have been a mistake from black, as white could (and did) sacrifice an exchange for a pawn and get some counterplay due to his powerful bishop on e4. Black made a practical decision immediately to sacrifice back an exchange, to get rid of the bishop monster and open the position. The remaining position with queen, rook and five pawns on each side after 35 moves looked drawish. That was however before white, having less than one minute left on the clock, blundered his rook at move 36 and resigned at move 37.

**Jacob Templen Grave (2202)** and **Håkon Bentsen (2088)** both got on the scoreboard thanks to a chicken ten moves Nimzo-Indian draw. Grave should try to defeat older and lower rated opponents with white if he wants to keep his ELO above 2200.

Teenagers **Sergey Eliseev (2041)** and **Andre Gjestemoen von Hirsch (2192)**, both from the Stavanger area at the west coast of Norway, bravely entered a razor blade poisoned pawn line in a Sicilian Najdorf. Black succeeded getting his queen out after snatching both the a- and b-pawn, but had more or less no other developed pieces and soon ran into a tactical 16. Nxe6!?. The position reportedly would have been unclear if black had replied with the critical 16.--- Bb4+!. As he instead took the knight on e6, white soon came an exchange up with an ongoing attack. 1–0 after 26 moves, as white's active rooks completed the mating attack without the queen.

**Morten Andersen (2182)** as white against **Pijus Greicius (2080)** went for a solid Queen's Pawn opening, but lagging behind on the clock without finding any advantage of the board he offered a draw after 15 moves. Apparently Andersen was satisfied to get a score following his too short loss from yesterday, while Greicius was satisfied to get a score following his too long loss from yesterday.

The teenager duel between **Ileysaa Bin-Suhayl (2168)** and **Max Dahl (2041)** was (even) another Reti opening. This time, for a change, white actually got a pleasant edge and eventually won a pawn on c6. Snatching a second pawn at d4 later was natural, but still a mistake from a white point of view, as black for some moves got substantial counterplay. Dahl however again ran seriously short of time, and definitely lost the position as he accepted an exchange of queens. Black managed to do his move 40 with two seconds left on the clock, but his position then was hopeless as white's passed b-pawn soon won a piece in the endgame.

**Brede Andre Hagen (1973)** and **Mathias Lind Schouten (2166)** meanwhile discussed the rare and creative Fantasy line of a Caro-Kann. White sacrificed a pawn at f3 and got a strong initiative, but black fought on and reached a messy position as white felt forced to sacrifice an exchange on e4. Leaving the kingside to snatch a queenside pawn with 28.--- Qxa3?? however was much too careless from black, as white after 29.Bd3! soon demonstrated a winning attack on the kingside. The final bishop endgame never was too exciting, due to white's extra bishop.

**Valentina Verbin (2023)** as white against **FM Ward Altarbosh (2177)** started up with a Reti and transposed into a King's Indian Advance. Black greedily snatched a pawn at d3 with his knight early in the middle game, and was allowed to take a second pawn at b4 a few moves later on. As white also stumbled into some tactical exchanges, black after 25 moves had reached a totally won endgame with two rooks, knight and six pawns against queen, bishop and four pawns.



Verbin vs Altarbosh

**Andreas Skotheim (2146)** versus **Terje Lund (2024)** was a Caro-Kann in which white got some space advantage, and came clearly better after black weakened his kingside with g5. Although queens were exchanged white kept a strong initiative and he after 25 moves had reached a winning position with rook, two bishops and six pawns against rook, bishop, knight and five pawns. Later white's passed c-pawn, escorted by the bishops, soon won a piece for white.

The young lions meeting between **Afras Mansoor (1931)** and **Bennet Hagner (2133)** was drawn within one and a half hour, but still was a tense firework battle. Chances were about equal from a Semi-Slav Anti-Meran line, and the position remained in dynamic balance after black hit in on f2 to get one rook and two pawns for two minor pieces. Some tactical exchanges later the players however landed in a drawn endgame with rook, bishop and a-pawn against rook and four pawns.

Finally the game between **Sondre Melaa (2117)** and **Simen Sørensen (1975)** was a Caro-Kann opening, leading to an isolated pawn position in which white soon got the upper hand with a strong kingside initiative. Black in desperation sacrificed a full rook to hit in on g2 with some counterplay, but although his king was a little airy white and his extra rook had no problems realizing the win.

## Open Group

The top rated players got a much harder second day in the Open. Top rated **Egmond-Gabriel Dulman (2065)** as white against eleven year old **Nicolai Østensen (1768)** was a pawn down with a cramped position almost all of the middle game, but escaped into what became a drawn rook endgame as his opponent blundered at move 40.



Østensen vs Dulman

Second rated **Dion Krivenko (2045)** played a more solid game as black against **Jamie Cross (1761)** and at one stage was reported close to winning in the rook endgame, but still landed in a dead drawn rook endgame. Cross, a 31 year old Australian working at the University of Oslo, actually finished third in the Open last year and should be considered strongly underrated.

While third rated **Andreas Skrede Hausken** had escaped to the GM group, fourth rated **Heine Johannessen (1930)** in the end lost a highly unpredictable jumping stick game as black against **Misha Galinsky (1756)**.

The only player from top five on the rating list to reach 2/2 following this was fifth rated **Bjørn Robert Unhjem (1924)**, today winning a piece in a highly original opening as white against **Olav Erikstad (1761)**.

Seventh rated **Torbjørn Dahl (1876)** however also was winning from the opening as white, and also joined the 2/2-club without too many nervous moments.

Today's veteran meeting in the Open came on the sixth board, as 65 year old **Ragnar Edvardsen (1865)** won by a kingside attack as black against 76 year old **Per Wibe (1755)**.

The seventh board clash between **Eivind Grunt Kreken (1838)** and **Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (1718)** on the other hand was a teenager duel, which white won by a violent kingside attack after only 21 moves.

The Open today had many intense and exciting attacking battles with young lions involved. 18 year old **Amund Pihl Strand (1712)** joined the 2/2-club following a successful kingside attack as black against **Jan Gunnar Fredriksen (1835)**, and so did twelve year old **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (1829)** following a patient queen endgame win against our new German chessfriend **Oliver Bach**



(1715). Fiskaaen has had a remarkable progress during the last months, and might well be a candidate for top three in this field. The mentioned six players (following some unmentioned draws in other games) are sharing the lead, and top board pairings for round three will be Fiskaaen–Unhjem, Strand–Dahl and Edvardsen–Kreken.

The higher rated players won most games in the midfield of the Open, but the lower board ranks produced many entertaining games and several surprising wins. Chess daddy **Ken Ronny Schouten (1318)** cashed in a wood of material to win a loose tactical game against **Torgeir Bø (1613)**, while **Morten Hammer (1307)** increased the positional pressure to win decisive material against **Benjamin Stenseng (1590)**.

Ten year old **Alina Shehzad (1184)** efficiently used her chance when her 69 year old opponent **Terje Lie (1522)** lost his patience and blundered, following a tense four-hour struggle.

No way to forget, both the young unrated players won memorable games today. Ten year old **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen** was in command from the opening as black against **Ole Jacob Johnsen (1483)**, and in the endgame soon went from pawn up to rook up.

13 year old **Tord Albrigtsen** tested a highly interesting exchange sacrifice as white against **Bjørn Noralf Dybvik (1458)** – and was rewarded as his bishop and two passed pawns overwhelmed the black rook in the endgame.



Olai Dyrhaug Eriksen vs Live J. Skigelstad



Leif Edvin Wærstad vs Monica Hestvik



Per-Erik Evensen vs Amanda Mai Irgens Eiding



Tord Albrigtsen vs Bjørn Noralf Dybvik

Photos by Tom Eriksen