

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2021

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

3



GM Group

In the first half of the double round, the first board duel between GM Tiger Hillarp Persson and GM Vahap Sanal was a not too exciting draw, while IM Frode Elsness lost on third board following a less successful black opening against GM Erik Blomqvist.

As Blomqvist made a draw in the second round, GM Frode Urkedal is the only remaining player with a 100 % score after he convincingly outmanoeuvred GM Titas Stremavicius on the second board today. Frode Urkedal following this is leading alone at 3,0/3, half a point ahead of GM-colleagues Vahap Sanal, Tiger Hillarp Persson, Erik Blomqvist, Vitaly Kunin, Alon Greenfeld and Stellan Brynell.

Kunin and Greenfeld both won attacking games against much younger scandinavian FMs today, while Brynell rested on his 2/2 with a walk over draw. The only non-GM at 2,5/3 is the 15 year old Norwegian surprise man Shazil Shehzad, today winning a jumpy attacking battle as white against Lithuanian FM Karolis Juksta.

GM Tiger Hillarp Persson (2521) versus **GM Vahap Sanal (2585)** started up like a Reti opening, but transposed into a Catalan as white later played d4. Black developed his bishop to c6 and then exchanged it for a knight on f3, leaving a position in which white was slightly better and black very solid. Not much more happened until the game was drawn by a sound repetition after 32 moves.

GM Frode Urkedal (2564) versus **GM Titas Stremavicius (2487)** not unexpectedly was a rather strange and closed Dutch opening. White gave up his dark-squared bishop for a knight, playing on his pair of knights in a closed position with all 16 pawns on board. White came some 25 minutes ahead on the clock as black spent more than one hour for the first 13 moves. Black still was solid on the board until he played 13.... c5?, giving white a very strong knight square on d4 after 14.dxc5!.



Stremavicius vs Urkedal

Later white instructively was able to keep his own king on b1 safe while opening the h-file and mobilizing his forces for an attack against the black king on e8. 1–0 after 30 moves as black's king could not survive for many more moves without a heavy loss of material. Urkedal was the winner of last year's Fagernes tournament, and despite some nervous moments during his first two games he has now again had a very promising start.

GM Erik Blomqvist (2518) today spent 45 minutes on his first eleven moves, but still had ten minutes more than **IM Frode Elsness (2465)** on the clock. The board was even worse from a black point of view, as white got a powerful pair of bishops and the safer king in this Vienna game. Although white's king was a little airy on c1, black's king on e8 was in hot water. Elsness eventually succeeded castling short and exchange queens, but still had a hard time as white's pair of bishops and d-file possession gave him pleasant pressure with no risk.



Blomqvist

Both players spent a lot of time, but white had the much easier position to play. Elsness anyway was in severe danger when he after 30 moves blundered a pawn at c7, and he then resigned when realizing that his plan was blundering a piece too.

Ludvig Carlsson (2374) versus **GM Vitaly Kunin (2547)** was another Sicilian Maroczy duel in which white came half an hour ahead on the clock. On the board white got both a pair of bishops and a center advantage, after black exchanged his light-squared bishop for a knight on d5. Black had a somewhat lame dark-squared bishop, but still looked fine due to his knight on d4. Chances were about even until white blundered with 25.f4?!, somehow overlooking a powerful Nc2! – winning a pawn with a much better position for black. White's position later was a study in collapse strategically as well as tactically, and black was a rook up with a winning attack when white resigned at move 34.

FM Elham Abdrlauf (2334) and **GM Kaido Kulaots (2511)** had another complex Sicilian duel, in which both players waited for a long time to declare their kings. White first went for a bayonet attack on the kingside with g4–g5, and then castled long although this meant he sacrificed his pawn at a4. Black made the better calculations and for some time had a much better position during the later complications. Running seriously short on time he however failed to find the most critical moves, and before 40 moves



Abdrlauf vs Kulaots

Abdrlauf succeeded escaping into a dead drawn bishop endgame with one against two pawns.

GM Alon Greenfeld (2509) arrived five minutes delayed for the morning round, but still came far ahead on the clock as **FM Noam Vitenberg (2305)** was nearly half an hour late. When the game finally started, the players discussed a modern Queen's Gambit line (Ragozin) with Bb4, in which white exchanged his light-squared bishop and then went for a kingside storm with h4 and e4. A tense struggle followed as black later tried to advance his queenside pawn majority, while white tried to start an attack against the exposed black king on f7. Having a few minutes more on the clock, white also made the better calculations. Although black's passed pawn reached c2 just before 40 moves, white then had a rook extra plus a mating attack.

GM Normunds Miezis (2467) gave his good old English fianchetto another try against **FM Fredrik Lindh (2296)**, reaching an unusual position in which white had a slight initiative after exchanging of all the bishops. After 25 moves the position with queen, two rooks and seven pawns on each side was about balanced. As both players made sensible moves all the way the games ended in a dead drawn rook endgame after 56 moves.



Miezis vs Lindh

The junior duel between **IM Jung Min Seo (2456)** and **FM Jens Evang Ingebreetsen (2274)** was a classical Italian opening line, in which the light-squared bishops were exchanged on e6. White got a center advantage after realizing the d4 break, but black still was fine due to his half open f-file and kingside prospects. 17.--- exd4?! followed by 18.--- e5? still was too much optimism from a black point of view. It turned out white could (and did) snatch first a pawn at a7 and then an exchange on f3, ending up with a rook more in the rooks and minor pieces endgame.



Ingebreetsen vs Jung Min Seo

FM Theodor Kenneskog (2309) and **GM Gudmundur Kjartansson (2433)** started up a Sicilian Najdorf race in which white castled long and black short. Although black got the pair of bishops, white was well ahead in the pawn race and appearedly had a promising attack after 20.h5. The GM pulled the brake in time and saved his king by exchanging off the queens, and after 42 moves the players by sensible moves had exchanged it all down to an endgame with one rook and no pawns on each side.

IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2432) versus **Gustav Törnngren (2197)** started up as a solid Russian opening, but the pawn symmetry was soon destroyed. After all the knights were exchanged white got a space advantage with some attacking prospects on the kingside due to his pawns on e5 and f4, while black had the better pawn structure and active bishops placed on c5 and f5. Chances remained about balanced until black much too carelessly played 23.--- Qd7?, overlooking 24.Bh4! Rec8 25.Rd1 with a highly disturbing d-file pin. White within five more moves won two bishops for rook and pawn. Forcing a queen exchange before move 40, Kaasen had no problems realizing an endgame with rook, bishop and two pawns against rook and three pawns. Törnngren fortunately resigned just in time to save the lunch for both players.

The highly talented junior players **Shazil Shehzad (2249)** and **FM Karolis Juksta (2397)** entered a Classical French line in which black spent more than 70 minutes for the first 15 moves. On the board he reportedly was better, although the position turned Messy with a big M after white sacrificed a knight on g5. Black misunderstood the position fatally with 18.--- g6?, weakening the kingside to give white a decisive kingside attack. White in turn overplayed by a highly unnecessary second knight sacrifice on d5. Black playing with two extra bishops theoretically was winning for a few moves, but still he from a practical point of view had a difficult position due to his open king. A few errors later white after all won with queen, rook and two passed pawns against queen and two bishops. White elegantly finished off a shaky but very creative game by sacrificing his rook on d8, to mate with the queen on b8.

So far so good **Sigurd Grøver (2105)** as white against **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2375)** today went for a solid Catalan opening. Although white got the pair of bishops and a center advantage, black due to his kingside prospects was fine on the board and some 15 minutes ahead on the clock after 18 moves. White tried to complicate by a somewhat mysterious exchange sacrifice at g3, but black later was an exchange up and completed his attack well before 40 moves.



Grøver vs Vestby-Ellingsen

FM Conor Murphy (2428) versus **Ileysaa Bin-Suhayl (2168)** was a Sicilian Sveshnikov duel, in which both players started to use a lot of time when they were out of the preparation. White went for a kingside pawn storm and left his king on e1. Black first had promising counterplay after sacrificing a pawn. Sacrificing a second pawn however was too much and white suddenly had a winning attack himself after evacuating his king via f1 to g2.

Vladan Nikolic (2216) and **IM Marsel Efroimsky (2417)** made a draw within two hours and 30 moves, but still it was an interesting game. Efroimski as black went for an Owen's opening with 1.--- e6 and 2.--- b6, and soon accelerated on the kingside with f5. Tactical exchanges left a position with two rooks and two minor pieces on each side. Black had a pair of bishops and the more active pieces, which was nearly enough to compensate white's extra pawn. Still a pawn up, white probably was closer to something when a draw was agreed by repetition.

IM Julian Martin (2396) first got a slight plus out of a closed Ruy Lopez line against **Andreas Skotheim (2146)**. This gradually developed into a clear advantage as white found much more active squares for his pieces in the early middle game. White had a close to winning domination after placing a powerful knight on f5 at move 26, and later was seen jogging around and picking up all the more pawns until black resigned after 45 moves.



Altarbosh vs Mikalsen

FM Ward Altarbosh (2177) as white against **IM Erlend Mikalsen (2373)** entered a Sicilian Dragon, but avoided the razor blade lines by castling short. The position probably was about standard with a slight plus for white until black blundered with 14... Na5?!, allowing 15.Nxa5 Qxa5 16.e5! with a decisive attack. As both players continued to play remarkably fast, they were soon afterwards seen in a rooks and minor pieces endgame which was totally winning for white due to his passed pawn at d6 and knight on e7. 1-0 came on board after 37 moves and two hours, as the d-pawn was about to give white an extra piece in the rook and minor piece endgame.

IM Christian Köpke (2346) and **Sondre Melaa (2117)** tested out a better balanced Ruy Lopez line, in which both players spent well above one hour for the first 16 moves. Exchanging his e4-pawn at d5 might have been inaccurate from a white point of view, as black with a knight on d5 later looked fine. About to run short of time in a worse position the IM creatively tried to complicate by sacrificing an exchange on e5, but the compensation soon vanished. Playing with an exchange for a pawn, black was probably clearly better when he accepted a draw by repetition a few moves before the time control. Köpke afterwards was highly critical of his own performance and called this draw «a lucky escape».

FM Øystein Bøyum Fossum (2302) got 15 minutes more on the clock as his opponent **Christian Grundekjøn (2102)** arrived delayed, but after 15 moves the time spending was already balanced. Via 1. Nf3 play transposed into an isolated queen's pawn position, in which black got the chance to disrupt white's kingside pawn structure by capturing at f3. The position still was about balanced, as white could protect his key d5-pawn and had some pressure against the backward black pawn at e7. Although both players had a pair of bishops after exchanging off all the knights, white had the much more powerful bishops and was close to winning when he after 26 moves established a passed pawn at d6, protected by a bishop at e7. Feeling the cockpit crumbling black tried to complicate by sacrificing an exchange for the e7 bishop and d6 pawn, and for some moves reached an unclear position with queen, bishop and six pawns against queen, rook and five pawns. Maybe the delayed arrival after all decided the game, as Grundekjøn short of time blundered with 35.--- Qxf3?? – somehow overlooking 36.Rg8+ Kh7 37.Qf8 with a paralyzing threat on g7.

Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2275) versus **Sergey Eliseev (2041)** was another entertaining battle between these highly talented teenagers from the Stavanger-Sandnes area. Something went wrong for black when he entered tactical exchanges just after the Sicilian opening, as white got a strong initiative after exchanging off the queens on d8. The remaining endgame with rook, knight and six pawns versus rook, bishop and six pawns first was much better for white due to black's lack of development and poor pawn structure. White's plan to open the h-file with h4–h5 however turned out to be a serious misunderstanding, as his knight on g5 and h7 became more exposed than black's king. 24.g3? reportedly was the decisive mistake as white had to play the knight back to g5 or Re1+ followed by Nf6 to save the knight. Eliseev in a flow efficiently used his chance to capture the knight and due to his extra bishop had no problems winning the endgame.

Tobias Lang Nilsen (2271) and **Laurin Perkampus (2076)** meanwhile discussed a Caro-Kann line in which white kept a very slight initiative after an early queen exchange. Black defended well and succeeded exchanging some more pieces, after which a draw was agreed in a balanced rook endgame after 26 moves.



Seifert vs Hagen

FM Volker Seifert (2246) and **Brede Andre Hagen (1973)** started up with an Accepted Queen's Gambit, reaching a typical isolated Queen's pawn position. Both players spent much time on the clock. Seifert first came slightly ahead on the board as he was able to uphold a dominating pawn at d5. Hagen however found a good plan to exchange off first the dark-squared bishops and then all the rooks, and probably was clearly better before he too fast went on to exchange the queens as well. After 35 moves the endgame

with bishop, knight and six pawns on each side looked drawish, but Seifert during mutual time pressure played much better for the next five moves. Due to his more active king and minor pieces white suddenly had a winning initiative after the time control. Seifert again took his time after 40 moves, but he kept up the pressure on the board and went on to win the knight endgame safely in the sixth hour.

Sverre Lye (1858) versus **FM Trygve Dahl (2249)** was even another positionally complex Sicilian Maroczy duel. White first had a space advantage in this one, but spent much time without finding any way forward. Black following this took over the initiative by placing a knight at c4 in move 23. Exchanging the knight and then exchanging his e4-pawn for the black b5-pawn later was a mistake from white: True enough white got two passed pawns on the queenside, but black suddenly had several dangerous attack routes against the white king on g1. Dahl in an inspired mood instructively demonstrated the attacking potential with queen and knight, completing his mating attack before 40 moves.

Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (1945) and **FM Mathias Unneland (2228)** are classmates from the NTG chess study, and first made a slow start with a positional English line. Chances after ten moves probably were about balanced, as white had a pair of bishops and black the slightly better pawn structure. The game however changed dramatically as black gave his own king much too much air condition by 12...g5?, allowing white to open the h-file with a strong attack.



Westrum vs Unneland

Westrum spent more than 90 minutes for his first 23 moves, but had a promising pressure. While white ran out of steam black somehow succeeded bolstering his kingside while gradually mobilizing for a counterattack on the queenside. Having forcing his opponent to exchange queens just before 40 moves, Unneland landed safely in a won rook and minor pieces endgame with an extra pawn.

Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1995) and **IM Robert Baskin (2398)** had a heavyweight Dutch Leningrad duel, in which all 32 pieces still were on board after 27 moves. Black had however then demonstrated the much better understanding of this position, as his kingside attack was about to become really dangerous while white still had made no breakthrough on the queenside. Rasmussen resigned after 32 moves as black had demonstrated a strong and instructive breakthrough plan with Bh3–Qh5–Ng4–Bg2–Qxh2+.



Baskin vs Rasmussen

Both players spent much time from the Nimzo-Indian opening in the junior duel between **Pijus Greicius (2080)** and **Jacob Templen Grave (2202)**. The starting point of the middle game was a hanging pawns position which first appeared very promising for white, since black decided to give up the pawn at c5 instead of moving it forward to c4. White later for some moves was a sound pawn up, but invited black's pieces into the game again by exchanging the queens. White later found nothing better than returning the extra pawn to exchange some more pieces, after which a draw was agreed in a very balanced rook and knight endgame just before 40 moves.



Andersen vs Hausken

Andreas Skrede Hausken (1936) and **Morten Andersen (2182)** discussed a rare Ruy Lopez line with 3... Nge7?! , in which white first was better due to his center pawns. 13.h4?! however turned out just to weaken white's own kingside. Within a few moves Andersen first came up with a lot of counterplay against white's center pawns and then snatched the pawn at h4 with his queen. White anyway was under pressure when he blundered with 24.Nf4?, allowing black to win two minor pieces and a pawn for a rook with 24... Rxf4! 25.Bxf4 Qxd4+ followed by 26... Qxf4.

Bennet Hagner (2132) versus **Andreas Tenold (1995)** was another teenager duel and another unbalanced Sicilian duel. White soon got the more dangerous attack after castling long, but it remained a tense struggle in which both players had spent more than 90 minutes before move 20. White's position turned winning after he picked up first one pawn at h5 and then another one at d6. Black however innovated some counterplay on the queenside and was rewarded as white stumbled into a highly disturbing Nc4+ followed by Ne3. Having won an exchange black also had the more dangerous attack, and he went on to win decisive material after the time control.

Håkon Bentsen (2088) and **Afras Mansoor (1931)** meanwhile discussed a Ruy Lopez position in which black helpfully opened the center in favour of white.

The result was an isolated pawn position in which white had all the better pieces, including a strong knight parked on the key d4 square.

White's decision to regroup his bishop from g5 via c1 to b2 was a bit mysterious, but still worked out fairly well as he could hit in on h7 with a strong attack a few moves later on. Mansoor after 30 moves

had less than three minutes left on the clock, but finally got some counterplay as white was not willing to give up his queen for a wood of other pieces with 31.Qxf5!. Instead the game suddenly turned in favour of black, as white gave up the c-file and entered non-working tactics. Having won an exchange black could force off the queens, to win safely with rook and two pawns versus knight and three pawns.



Mansoor vs Bentsen

Emils Mierins (2057) gave his open Sicilian with 4.Qxd4 another test as white in another teenager duel against **Andre Gjestemoen-von Hirsch (2192)**. The position later developed into some kind of Sicilian Maroczy, in which black a bit loose sacrificed a pawn on the queenside. White in a Benkö-like position found nothing better than returning the pawn to exchange some more pieces, and draw was agreed in a very balanced rook and minor piece endgame after 37 moves.

Mathias Lind Schouten (2166) versus **Christian Tunge (2044)** was another Sicilian Dragon duel in which both players castled short. The opening worked out much better from a black point of view, as he got a close to winning position after hitting in with a neon lights flashing exchange sacrifice on c3. Black however missed the coordination between brain and hand for two very critical seconds as he placed his knight on d2 instead of taking the pawn at c3. As white could win the knight with 18.Bxd2, this turned the position all around from more or less winning to definitely losing from a black point of view.

FM Richard Bjerke (2102) and **Valentina Verbin (2023)** started up with a closed Catalan, but soon ended up with an isolated queen's pawn position which was promising from a white point of view. Bjerke gave up most of his advantage by exchanging knights on e4, allowing black to play dxe4 and get rid of her pawn weakness. White later had a pair of bishops, but still was worse as his fianchetto bishop at g2 was limited by black's new e4-pawn. White's try to exchange for somewhat unclear reasons lost a pawn, hence Verbin after 39 moves had reached a close to winning endgame with rook, knight and five pawns against rook, bishop and five pawns. Black in turn however gave up most of her advantage with a much too slow move 40. Realizing this she immediately accepted an invitation for a repetition of moves after the time control.

Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2111) versus **Max Dahl (2041)** was a Classical French duel, in which white's center advantage proved more important than black's kingside space. Cleverly hiding his king on h2, behind black's h3-pawn, white soon created a passed pawn at f7 and won decisive material after 40 moves.

Terje Lund (2024) versus **Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2084)** was another Trøndelag duel, starting up with a fairly balanced and positional Nimzo-Indian. When the position opened up after two hours white missed a more or less winning sacrifice with 26.Nxg7!, and then allowed black to create counterplay by an interesting pawn sacrifice on d4. The tide however turned back as black did not test out the consequent exchange sacrifice on d4, instead inviting white to play g5 with a smashing kingside attack. Lund later gave black no more chances, and completed the attack by mating black's king on e7 after 45 moves.

GM Stellan Brynell (2431) had requested a walk over draw, and as we then had 67 players **Simen Sørensen (1975)** got a walk over win. Both players will be back on track for round four.

Open Group

The top boards in the Open started with a rather safe 21-move draw between 65 year old **Ragnar Edvardsen (1865)** and 15 year old **Eivind Grunt Kreken (1838)** on the third board, but later there was a lot of fire.

The patient 12 year old **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (1829)** probably played an outstanding positional game when defeating **Bjørn Robert Unhjem (1924)** on the first board, instructively building up a superior position and then cashing in two pawns before finally deciding the game with a direct attack on the black king.



Fiskaaen

On second board **Torbjørn Dahl (1876)** as black against **Amund Pihl Strand (1712)** was under pressure most of the middle game, but still succeeded to turn the open kingside against white's king during mutual time pressure.

First rated **Egmond-Gabriel Dulman (2065)** as black against **Maximilian Lystad (1767)** again was reported in deep trouble most of the middle game, but again defended actively and succeeded to scrape a draw a pawn down in the endgame.

Second rated **Dion Krivenko (2045)** also had some shaky moments in a messy middle game against **Misha Galinsky (1756)**, but still in the end won by a powerful kingside attack.

The Stjernen chess club duel on board six also got a winner, as sixth rated **Sigurd Kittilsen (1881)** after nearly six hours succeeded realizing his extra pawn in a complicated rook endgame against **Jamie Cross (1761)**.

Many youngsters are doing well in this tournament so far, and junior players **Evsuld Mygmarsuren (1650)**, **Ask Amundsen (1816)**, **David Hellesøy (1500)**, **Olai Dyrhaug Eriksen (1809)** and **Nicolai Østensen (1768)** all won their games more or less convincingly on boards 8–12.

Following this Fiskaaen and Dahl are sharing the lead at 3,0/3, and Dahl will get the advantage of playing white in their fourth round meeting. Nine players are sharing third place at 2,5/3, hence the situation for the upcoming rounds is very unpredictable.

Relatively few surprising results were seen on the lower boards today, but we noted that ten year old **Alina Shehzad (1184)** and **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen (unrated)** both won well deserved against opponents above 1600. Another notable surprise was **Anne Grete Nebell (1262)** drawing against **Jon Arne Stokhaug (1861)**.

Still no complaints about the fighting spirit in this group as only one out of 64 players requested a walk over draw in the first half of the double round, and in the end 24 out of 31 games got a winner.



H. Johannessen vs Carlin



S. Lye vs Mygmarsuren



Eiding vs Gåsland



A. Shehzad vs Brønmo

Photos by Tom Eriksen