

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2021

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 5



### GM Group

The Swedes after round five took over the lead for the first time: GM Tiger Hillarp following a successful opening won a nice attacking duel against GM Stellan Brynell on second board, while IM Jung Min Seo on first board had few problems saving a draw as black against Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal.

First rated GM Vahap Sanal meanwhile picked up an exchange in the middle game and much later won the endgame as black against Gudmundur Kjartansson. Third rated GM Vitaly Kunin, fifth rated GM Erik Blomqvist and sixth rated GM Kaido Kulaots meanwhile all won more or less convincingly in five-hour games against young Norwegian opponents. The GMs above 2500 made an outstanding 6,5 out of 7 today, as Alon Greenfeld of Israel elegantly won a much better endgame against so far solid Swedish FM Fredrik Lindh.

Hillarp following a brilliant first half of the tournament is now leading alone at 4,5/5, but still the tiger no way can feel safe as Sanal, Urkedal, Blomqvist, Kulaots and Seo are all running half a step behind him at 4,0. Following the very strong result for the GMs above 2500 this was not a great round for the title norm candidates below 2500, but Seo still is on schedule for a GM-norm. Two Norwegian juniors, FM Elham Abdulrauf and FM Jens Ingebretsen, are around schedule for IM-norms and several other players can still be in that run.

**GM Frode Urkedal (2564)** versus **IM Jung Min Seo (2456)** started up like a Semi-Slav opening, but transposed into a classical Queen's Gambit exchange line in which white's minority attack on the queenside gave him a slight plus.

It still did not give any lasting advantage as black found a reasonable set up for his remaining pieces, and the game was draw by a sound repetition after 32 moves.



Urkedal vs Seo

**GM Tiger Hillarp Persson (2521)** as white in the Swedish second board duel against **GM Stellan Brynell (2431)** started up as a symmetric English with 1.c4 c5.

The game soon left the main lines and became everything but symmetric. Black after 9 moves had spent 40 minutes and put his queen on c6 and the knights on e5 and g4, while white had spent 70 minutes and played the unusual combination of e3 and g3. Reportedly Persson still had the better preparation, and as the variation recently has been played in several top level games Brynell



**Hillarp Persson vs Brynell**

was dissatisfied not remembering how to play it. In the middle game white's king looked a little airy on e2, but he got a clear advantage due to the more active minor pieces as black still struggled to develop his pair of bishops. As black finally succeeded in completing his development after 25 moves white had won two pawns, and the passed b-pawn soon proved decisive. Just before 40 moves white elegantly finished off the game by sacrificing his rook on f7, to mate the black king with his queen and remaining rook.

**GM Gudmundur Kjartansson (2433)** and **GM Vahap Sanal (2585)** transposed into a Semi-Slav Anti-Meran line, in which black soon hit back in the center with c5. The standard hanging pawns position became much less standard as white sacrificed a rook to win the d5-pawn and the bishop at b7. Black greedily snatched another pawn and after 40 moves had a clear material plus with queen, rook and five pawns against queen, bishop and four pawns. He still had a hard time winning as white's remaining pieces were active and black's king open. Late in the fifth hour Sanal managed to hide his own king while activating his queen and rook for a decisive attack against the white king.

**FM Trygve Dahl (2249)** as black against **GM Erik Blomqvist (2518)** got even another complex duel in a Sicilian Maroczy position. Blomqvist apparently was well prepared and succeeded in getting some advantage after playing f4 followed by f5. Black's decision to go for counterplay in the center with a d5-break was very understandable, but still proved insufficient, as white coolly cashed in two pawns with a winning position. As both players passed the time control at move 40, black realized he was now three pawns down with no real counterplay, and consequently resigned.

Norwegian **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2375)** went for a patient 3.Bb5+ against the Sicilian opening of Estonia **GM Kaido Kulaots (2511)**. White came ten minutes ahead on the clock and slightly better on the board after he disrupted black's kingside pawns with 15.Bxf6, and then kicked away the remaining black knight from e5 with 16.f4.

The position however was very double-edged and time-consuming for both players. Black succeeded in hiding his king at e7 and get all the more counterplay in the g-file. Black's position turned winning as he won a pawn in the center and opened diagonals for his bishops a few moves later on.

A tense struggle still followed until black won a piece by making the better tactical calculations at move 39–40. Kulaots obviously also is a big shark steaming upward in this field.

**FM Elham Abdrlauf (2334)** versus **GM Titas Stremavicius (2487)** was another Sicilian duel, this time an open line in which white got the pair of bishops after transferring his knight to d6 in the opening. Black however was ahead in development and appeared fine if not better after the following queen exchange at b6. Black after intervening to c2 with his rook won a pawn just before 40 moves, but still had a long road to win the game due to white's passed a-pawn and barking bishops.



**Abdrlauf vs Stremavicius**

Stremavicius left a repetition and eventually won white's key pawn at a6 by tactics, but Abdrlauf due to countertactics with 45.Bxe6! could eliminate the remaining black pawns. The 16 year old Norwegian later had remarkably few problems holding the pawnless endgame with rook versus rook and knight. Stremavicius is still lurking just behind the top boards following this draw, while Abdrlauf is walking on the water and balancing around schedule for an IM-norm.

**FM Noam Vitenberg (2305)** and **GM Vitaly Kunin (2547)** meanwhile discussed a rather closed Bogó-Indian position.

White lagged half an hour behind on the clock, but due to black's backward pawn at c6 he appeared slightly better on the board. Black later succeeded first to activate his pieces and then to exchange the c6-weakness. Although black was slightly better, the endgame with queen, bishop and four pawns against queen, knight and four pawns after 35 moves appeared drawish. Vitenberg short of time for 40 moves was understandably frustrated to blunder his knight, and in frustration played on in a hopeless queen endgame until blundering his queen as well.



**Lindh and Kunin**

**GM Alon Greenfeld (2509)** versus **FM Fredrik Lindh (2296)** was a Grünfeld-Indian fianchetto line, slow on the board as well as on the clock. Black probably was fine after exchanging his kingside knight on c3. White still kept a queenside pressure after exchanging the queens, and after 40 moves the remaining endgame with rook, two minor pieces and five pawns on each side was at best very difficult for black due to white's more active rook and pair of bishops.

1-0 came after 57.Be6! as black's discovered that although his rook at f5 had six open squares in the f-file, all of them were now controlled by white's pieces.

**Shazil Shehzad (2249)** and **IM Frode Elsness (2465)** investigated a closed Ruy Lopez line in which white first had a slight edge due to his pair of bishops, and also came well ahead on the clock. After the light-squared bishops were exchanged at e6 in move 19, the remaining position with queen, rook, bishop, knight and seven pawns against queen, rook, two knights and seven pawns was perfectly fine for black, although he still lagged some 40 minutes behind on the clock. The tide started to turn as white sacrificed or blundered a pawn, although he first got about enough compensation due to his active pieces and black's inferior kingside pawn structure. Hard-working Elsness got something to play for and within two more hours succeeded first to exchange of the rook and knight, and then to win a queen endgame which due to his queenside pawn majority was at best very difficult for white.



Shezad and Fossum

**FM Øystein Bøyum Fossum (2302)** today became a little too passive in his English fianchetto opening, hence **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2432)** could take over the initiative as black with a powerful d5-break. Following this black after 20 moves had exchanged three sets of minor pieces and got a pleasant initiative, with a passed pawn at a4 and a pressure against white's backward d-pawn. Although black's advantage had some ups and downs the rest was a long uphill struggle from a white point of view. Short of time and short of moves, white just before the time control stumbled into a d-file pin which won a piece for black.

**FM Conor Murphy (2428)** versus **FM Mathias Unneland (2228)** started up as a half open Sicilian Alapin line, reaching a isolated pawn position in which white probably was slightly better due to black's pawn weakness at e6. Black first delayed his castling too long and then castled too early at move 14, since white could play 15.Qe1! with a double attack on the e6 pawn and a knight on b4. Black tried to complicate by sacrificing two minor pieces for a rook, but white had no problems whatsoever to find one of the safely won endgames.

**Tobias Lang Nilsen (2271)** as white against **IM Marsel Efroimsky (2417)** took back with the queen at d4 in an open Sicilian, and then castled long to go for a kingside pawn storm. Black avoided dangers on the kingside by exchanging off the queens, but halted in a balanced rook and minor piece endgame which was drawn by repetition after 30 moves and two hours.



Baskin (left) and Efroimsky vs Nilsen (back)

**Gustav Törnngren (2197)** versus **IM Robert Baskin (2398)** was a highly original English opening line, in which black plays Nf6–Nd5–Nb4–Nd3–Nf4–Ne6 – after which white exchanged the hyper knight for his bishop. Although a far from frightening bishop on d7 after eleven moves was the only piece black had developed, he reportedly still was fine as white due to the disturbing knight had played his king via e2 to a slightly awkward position on f1. Both players understandably spent more than one hour for the first 14 moves. The position however then slowed down within a few moves. Some exchanges later a draw was agreed after 22 moves in a much too balanced endgame with rook and opposite coloured bishops.

**IM Julian Martin (2396)** and **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2274)** today had a hot discussion about a closed Ruy Lopez line in which white's pawns at d5 and f5 gave him a big space advantage, but black still came better as he could put pressure on the d5 pawn. Black definitely had got the upper hand as he after 22 moves won the pawn and placed a dominating knight on d5, with a 45-minute advantage on the clock. Black let white into the game again as he allowed an interesting knight sacrifice on g5, instead of just exchanging the knights on e4 with a sound extra pawn. Black did not take the knight, but within a few moves hit back with his own attack on the kingside. Following some more mistakes from white, black after all landed safely in a won rook and knight endgame. Ingebretsen missed the IM-norm with half a point last year, and definitely is in the run again following this win.

**GM Normunds Miezis (2467)** not unexpectedly went for another unorthodox English fianchetto as white against **Morten Andersen (2182)**. Andersen apparently was well prepared and did fine after both players castled long. Later in the middle game black however got nowhere with his kingside attack, while white opened the a-file with some pressure on the queenside. Black could have had some counterplay with 27... b5!, but instead decided to invite the white rook in at a7 with 27... Kc8?. The GM efficiently used his chances to open attacking lines and black's defence collapsed within three more moves.



**Andersen vs Miezis**

Having made three IM-norms within the last year, 18 year old **Ludvig Carlsson (2374)** was a clear favorite as white against 17 year old **Ieysaa Bin-Suhayl (2168)**. White's win in 15 moves and less than half an hour still was more or less shocking. The opening was a Queen's Indian gambit line in which white sacrificed the d5 pawn for an initiative. Black somehow mixed up the lines and played much too fast when castling short – too late realizing that he had no way to save the pinned knight on d5 after 11.Qb3!.

**Andreas Skotheim (2146)** versus **IM Erlend Mikalsen (2373)** was another 3.Bb5+-Sicilian, in which black by sound means came better after white went for a highly original (read: suspect) bishop maneuver with Bd3–Bc2–Ba4–Bxd7. Exchanging off the queens later on did nothing to cure white's problems, as black had a pair of bishops, the a-file and all the better pieces in the remaining rook and minor pieces endgame. Again Mikalsen however played too fast in a won position. Skotheim somehow succeeded in reorganizing his pieces for defence, while black's center break with d5 only helped white to achieve exchanges. Following this white after 55 moves escaped into an endgame with rook, knight and one pawn against rook, bishop and one pawn. Although Skotheim lagged nearly 90 minutes behind of the clock, he still proved able to exchange the remaining pieces and reach a draw which was very unexpected following the position after 20 moves.

**IM Christian Köpke (2346)** and **Sigurd Grøver (2105)** had a Classical French duel which first appeared fairly balanced and rather dry. The struggle intensified as black just before 20 moves put his knight on e4, after which white gave up his pair of bishops to weaken the black pawn structure with 20.Bxe4. With both players about to run short of time white first snatched a pawn, then returned it to exchange queens with a worse position. Black in turn first established a close to decisive passed pawn, but then gave the pawn away for nothing. Due to his barking bishops black still was slightly better with rook, three minor pieces and three pawns left on each side after 40 moves. Köpke eventually succeeded in winning a pawn when both players looked likely to run short of time again. Black's active pieces after five and a half hour still assured him a draw with rook and knight versus rook, knight and g-pawn.

**FM Theodor Kenneskog (2309)** as white against **Laurin Perkampus (2076)** tested out a rare and apparently harmless Caro-Kann line in which the queens are exchanged at d1 after five moves. Black however spent much time from the opening and still lost his thread, as white due to his pair of bishops had a pleasant plus after 17 moves. Black at that stage had only 16 minutes left on the clock, and after losing his h-pawn he failed to find any plan for saving the rest of his kingside.

**Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2275)** versus **Brede Andre Hagen (1973)** was a French-like Caro-Kann line with 3...c5?!, in which white soon got a strong initiative and planted a dominating knight on d6. Kvaløy in an inspired mood sacrificed a knight on f7 and smashed through to mate the black king on h7 before 30 moves.

**FM Volker Seifert (2246)** versus **Sergey Eliseev (2041)** was another modern Queen's Gambit exchange line with a black bishop on b4. White came clearly better as black somehow forced himself to recapture on f6 with the g-pawn, weakening seriously his kingside position. Both players spent much time and had only half an hour left on the clock after 14 moves. Understandable black searched for tactical complications, but he succeeded only to exchange the queens and lose a pawn. Also having the much better pawn structure, even patient Seifert had no problems winning this rooks and minor pieces endgame well before 40 moves.



Eliseev vs Seifert

**FM Ward Altarbosh (2177)** as white against **Jacob Templen Grave (2202)** went for another strange Caro-Kann line, in which white played d3 and castled long. Black in turn did not castle at all, but via f7 and g8 transported his king around to h7. In an overall messy middle game white came slightly better after he succeeded in exchanging his f-pawn for the more important black pawn at d4. White's practical chances increased as black had only 15 minutes left after 23 moves. Grave still succeeded in reaching a rooks and minor pieces endgame in which white's pair of bishops gave him only a marginal plus.



Altarbosh vs Grave

Playing too fast Altarbosh overlooked a pseudo-sacrifice exchanging one of his bishops, after which the players before 40 moves landed in a dead drawn endgame with rook and pawn versus rook and pawn (which they for unknown reasons however continued to enjoy for more than 20 moves).



Tenold vs Juksta

**Andreas Tenold (1995)** versus **FM Karolis Juksta (2397)** was a very closed Dutch Stonewall duel in which black's pair of bishops was not much of an asset, but he still did fine after weakening white's pawn structure by an exchange on f4. While white later found no active plan whatsoever, black used the weakened white pawn structure as a springboard to open both the f- and g-file. As white ran short of time too, black had created convincing threats against the white king after 32 moves.

**Vladan Nikolic (2216)** today got a pair of bishops plus a center, which in total gave him a clear advantage, as white in a Bogo-Indian against **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (1945)**. Black spent a lot of time without finding any good plan and after 20 moves had only four minutes left on the clock in a troublesome position. After the queens were exchanged white had a strategically won position, and black anyway was lost in the endgame when blundering two minor pieces for a rook. Black finally found some counterplay thanks to his passed h-pawn after the first time control, but white's passed a-pawn won the race. The bishop endgame after 50 moves was not too exciting as white had both the bishops.

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (1936)** versus **Andre Gjestemoen von-Hirsch (2192)** was a rare Sicilian Alapin line in which white delayed the d4-advance for a long time. Black had no problems from the opening, but chances still appeared fairly balanced after the queens were exchanged at move 24. White however played with a rook on a4 and a weak back rank. Following this 26.c4? was too weakening. Black by some inaccuracies let white into the game again. Still the rook and knight endgame was much better for black and the final knight endgame with an extra pawn and the more active king was nothing but won.



Mansoor vs Schouten

**Mathias Lind Schouten (2166)** as white against unpredictable **Afras Mansoor (1931)** tried to slow it down with an English fianchetto, but black had no problems and soon established a space advantage on the kingside. The balance changed all the more in favour of black as he was able to block white's queenside initiative while opening up the kingside for his own attack. Cashing in an exchange on a1 following a tactical 18...Nxc5! was perfectly fine for black, but as he played wrong afterwards white suddenly got some real counterplay in

the a1-h8 diagonal. Black in the end felt forced to sacrifice back an exchange to get off the queens, and the remaining endgame with opposite coloured bishops was a stone dead draw.



**Sondre Melaa (2117)** and **Sverre Lye (1858)** started up with a mysterious Sicilian Rossolimo line, which went seriously wrong for white as black got a half open f-file plus a pair of bishops. Black chose an inaccurate timing to open the kingside, but due to his pair of bishops still was much better in the endgame with queen and two minor pieces on each side. Black however became too eager to clarify the situation and exchanged down to a queen endgame which was soon drawn.

**Bennet Hagner (2133)** versus **Max Dahl (2041)**

was a Caro-Kann Advance duel which first was fine for black, although white due to his space got some advantage after exchanging all the knights. A tense struggle followed as black snatched a pawn on b2 while white continued his kingside attack. After the players cooperated to exchange off the queens, black came a pawn up in the rook and bishop endgame. Still he was in danger of losing partly due to white's passed c-pawn and partly due to black's offside bishop at h4.



Dahl vs Hagner

Exchanging the bishop wreck was a natural idea

which however turned out to lose in this strange endgame. Black true enough was a pawn up and had four passed pawns in the remaining rook endgame, but white more importantly had the three more advanced passed pawns at c6, h5 and g6. Sacrificing the c6-pawn later was unnecessary, but still proved sufficient to win as white after 55 moves sacrificed his rook on f8 to trick in a new queen at h8. Although far from perfect, 13 year old Bennet Hagner's first game win at Fagernes definitely was both creative and entertaining.

**Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2111)** versus **Terje Lund (2024)** was a Reti duel in which black following tactical exchanges won a pawn. White still got the much better position as lines and diagonals were opened for his kingside attack. Black eventually succeeded bolstering his kingside, and 23.Rh6? actually was flashy more than rational from a white point of view. It still gave a jackpot as black immediately blundered with 23... Ng6? – overlooking a tactical R1xg6! followed by Nf6+!, forcing mate in a few moves.

**Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1995)** as white started up with a patient Catalan today. **FM Richard Bjerke (2102)** answered with a modern and not patient line with 7... Nc6!?, in which black reportedly can get enough play for the pawn. So did not happen in this game. Although white spent a lot of time he apparently had the better preparation, as black within a few moves lost a second pawn instead of getting compensation for the first one. White's passed b-pawn made the queen and minor piece endgame a rather easy win, despite his open king.



Bjerke vs Rasmussen

**Pijus Greicius (2080)** versus **Valentina Verbin (2023)** was a Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line, in which chances became about balanced following an early queen exchange. Black gradually took over a light initiative. As white still had a disturbing pair of bishops, the players cooperated to exchange it down to a drawn rook and bishop endgame with four pawns on each side.



Sørensen vs Mierins

**Emils Mierins (2057)** as white in a Sicilian played 2.Nc3 and then much too slow against **Simen Sørensen (1975)**. Hence black before 15 moves could exchange the center pawns and have a slight initiative due to his pair of bishops. As black started to move his pieces backwards and spent a lot of time on the clock, white after suddenly waking up instead got a strong initiative around move 25. Black after 27 moves had less than one minute left on the clock in a difficult position and definitely lost it as he blundered a rook a few moves later on.

Finally, **Håkon Bentsen (2088)** and **Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2084)** entered a well know French Tarrasch line with an early queen exchange on d4. The line is known to be drawish, but still with some chances for both sides as white has three pawns against two on the queenside and black four against three on the kingside. White played too passive for the next moves and came slightly worse. Still the position looked more drawish than not until white trapped his own knight at a5 and had to give up the c-pawn to get it out. As black still had the more active knight he won a second queenside pawns within a few moves. Black with an extra pawn on each side had a safe win in the rook endgame.

**Christian Grundekjøn (2102)** after a demanding double round requested a walk over draw in round five, following which **Christian Tunge (2044)** got a walk over win. Both will be back for an exciting round six, when top board pairings in the GM group will be Jung Min Seo versus Tiger Hillarp, Vahap Sanal against Erik Blomqvist and Kaido Kulaots versus Frode Urkedal.

# Open Group

In the Open, first board meeting between **Dion Krivenko (2045)** and **Eivind Grunt Kreken (1838)** was a lively Sicilian position suddenly turning into a bankbox. It was buried as a dead draw after 28 moves.



Fiskaaen vs Kittilsen in front and Kreken in the back

Second board meeting between 28 year old **Sigurd Kittilsen (1881)** and 12 year old **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (1829)** became a more exciting Sicilian duel. Black failed to fulfill a very promising attack in the middle game – after which white’s pair of bishops outnumbered black’s rook in the endgame. The bishops actually were in action until the very last move of that game, as white after five hours had to mate with king and two bishops against king.

The more experienced players overall had a good round on the top boards, as 45 year old **Torbjørn Dahl (1876)** hit back from a dubious Alekhine opening line and won another nice attacking game as black against 16 year old **Ask Amundsen (1816)**.



Dahl vs Amundsen

The generation duel between 15 year old **Heine Johannessen (1930)** and 65 year old **Ragnar Edvardsen (1865)** on the fourth board on the other hand was a rather solid and sensible draw .

Dahl and Kittilsen following this are sharing the first place at 4,5/5 and will have to play each other tomorrow, while Krivenko and Kreken are sharing third place at 4,0/5 and will have to play opponents from the bigger group at 3,5/5.

Notably first rated **Egmond-Gabriel Dulman (2065)** is down at 3,0/5 after being crushed by 17 year old **Max Moe Pedersen (1837)** in just 30 moves today. Dulman following this probably must win all his remaining four games to reach top three.

The Open had some more surprising results today, and again many young players looked impressive. 15 year old **Theo N. Johannessen (1668)**, not to be confused with his identical twin brother Heine, dominated from the Slav opening and won well deserved as white against **Thomas Sekkingstad (1812)**.

Eleven year old **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1650)** won following a great attack as white against **Olai Dyrhaug Eriksen (1809)**. 17 year old **Live Jørgensen Skigelstrand (1649)** also could be very well satisfied after outplaying **Maximilian Lystad (1767)** as black.

19 year old **David Hellesøy (1500)** confirmed his status as a very underrated player by winning a rapidly changing game as black against **Lars Thormod Haugen (1756)**.

The most underrated player present at Fagernes still might be ten year old **Alina Shehzad (1184)**, producing another sensation as she today defeated **Guttorm Andersen (1731)**. True enough this also was a jumpy game of chess which both players got several chances to win, but Alina was clearly better most of the time and neatly decided in a won endgame after five hours. 55 year old Andersen should be praised for his very sporty congratulation to the very young and low rated opponent after the game, illustrating the great atmosphere this group (also) has had so far.



A. Shehzad vs Andersen



Sekkingstad in front and Myagmarsuren vs Eriksen in the back



Lien vs Orban

Photos by Tom Eriksen