

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2021

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 7



### GM Group

No short draws were seen on the top boards this round (either). Top three GM-duels Tiger Hillarp–Kaido Kulaots, Erik Blomqvist–Vitaly Kunin and Titas Stremavicius–Stellan Brynell still all were drawn. First rated GM Vahap Sanal won against IM Frode Elsness and so did second rated Frode Urkedal against FM Jens Ingebretsen.

Hillarp following this defended his lead and at 6,0/7 he is now half a point ahead of Blomqvist and Kulaots, while Sanal and Urkedal heads a group of six players at 5.0/7. The last chances for GM-norms are definitely gone as Norwegian IM Frode Elsness and Swedish IM Jung Min Seo both lost their games today, but a handful of Norwegian or Swedish players can still reach an IM-norm with a strong spurt in the two final rounds.

First board duel between Swedish GM Tiger Hillarp (2521) and Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots (2511) started as a standard Grünfeld-Indian Exchange line, in which both players spent only about five minutes for the first 11 moves. Then white played the unusual 12.h4 – after which black spent more than half an hour before exchanging his bishop for a knight on f3. Hillarp later also started to spend some time and obviously had some worries about his open king. Due to his pair of bishops and center pawns he still held a promising initiative in the early middle game. White's initiative appeared close to winning when he took control over the c-file with his rook at move 23. Snatching a pawn with 24.Bxa7? however was too greedy, as black after 24... Qd7! followed by 25... Qg4+ immediately got very disturbing counterplay on the kingside.



Hillarp vs Kulaots

With three minutes left for white and one minute for black, the players after 35 moves agreed first to exchange queens and then to share the point.

Tiger Hillarp might have missed a chance more or less to clinch first prize this round, but at 6,0/7 he has an amazing tournament performance well above 2700 and still leads alone.

**GM Erik Blomqvist (2518)** versus **GM Vitaly Kulin (2547)** was another Sicilian Maroczy a la Dragon. All four knights were exchanged within move 16, after which white had a pleasant edge due to his pressure against black's backward pawn at d6. Blomqvist bravely played on for a win with a kingside pawn storm and then sacrificed an exchange to get two connected pawns on d5 and e5. Kulin however defended soundly and sacrificed back an exchange on d5 to land in a totally drawn endgame with opposite coloured bishops just before 40 moves.



**Kulin vs Blomqvist**

30 year old Blomqvist today missed a possible chance to catch in his countryman Persson, but at 5,5/7 Blomqvist is a full point above expected score and shared second with a performance well above 2600.

Kulin following his slow start with 2,5/4 probably needed a win here to fight for top three, but saving the draw in a difficult black game means he is still fully in the fight for the money prizes.

Blomqvist was lucky to get white again against Tiger Hillarp in round 8, and this Swedish GM-duel obviously will be very important in the fight for first prize.

**GM Titas Stremavicius (2487)** as white against **GM Stellan Brynell (2431)** went for an English opening with 1.c4, but later transposed into a roughly balanced Queen's Gambit Tarrasch in which the position circled around black's isolated pawn at d5. After the game Stremavicius was very dissatisfied with his opening and early middle game, as white got less than no advantage after allowing black to exchange first the queens at a4 and then the isolated pawn at d4. Brynell on the other hand was dissatisfied with his play later on, claiming it should have been possible to force that draw much earlier on. As black accepted a disruption of his kingside pawns white after all had a slight edge in the double rook endgame with four pawns on each side. Black still appeared to have reasonable control, and it all dried out with a draw by repetition after 55 moves. Following this both these GMs have good chances for a moneyprize, but both now need a strong spurt to reach top three.



**Stremavicius vs Brynell**

In round 8 Brynell will be white against Urkedal in a very important Scandinavian GM-duel, while Stremavicius will have to take the black pieces against Kulaots in an even more important Baltic GM-duel.

**GM Vahap Sanal (2585)** and **IM Frode Elsness (2465)** meanwhile started up with a rare Vienna line in which white sacrifices his pawn on e4, but gets it back after 4.Qh5 followed by 5.Qxe5+. After the queens were exchanged at e7 white came well ahead on the clock and kept an edge on the board due to his space advantage on the kingside. The endgame with two rooks, knight and seven pawns against two rooks, bishop and seven pawns after 25 moves probably should be a draw from a black point of view.



**Elsness vs Sanal**

Seen from a white point of view it still was promising as he had the more advanced pawns and all the better pieces. To make a long history short: Sanal professionally circled around with his pieces, increasing the pressure on the board as well as on the clock, until Elsness after 58 moves lost a pawn and resigned in a collapsing position. Top rated Sanal following this is in the fight for top three prizes against, while Elsness for this week is definitely out as a GM norm candidate. Sanal will get a difficult black game against Kunin tomorrow, but might still have chances even for the first prize if able to win again then.

**GM Frode Urkedal (2564)** versus **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2274)** was a Slav in which white established a space advantage with c5. White also got the pair of bishops after black exchanged his light squared bishop for a knight on f3. The computers gave white a notable advantage, although black was some 25 minutes ahead on the clock and appeared satisfied after realizing his center break with e5. Within a few moves white took black's pawns at c6 and d5, but ran into some counterplay as his king was still in the open e-file. White found it necessary



**Urkedal vs Ingebretsen**

to give back two pawns to castle, and got his jackpot as black soon blundered a piece in an awkward e-file pin. The rest was transport from a white point of view. Last year's winner Urkedal is back nearly on track for a top three prize, while Ingebretsen following this loss probably must win his game in both round 8 and round 9 to make an IM-norm.

**GM Alon Greenfeld (2509)** and **FM Trygve Dahl (2249)** transposed into some kind of King's Indian fianchetto line, in which white's center gave him a slight advantage. His active pair of knights combined with a pawn storm on the kingside gave white a close to winning initiative around move 20–28. Originally, white at the next move sacrificed a knight on b5 by playing Nxb5. The sacrifice reportedly was dubious from a computer point of view, but still very challenging in a practical test over the board. As black failed to find the very difficult defence plan, white within a few moves won back the material with a decisive attack.

White however asked his position for too much when sacrificing his last minor piece with 38.Be4?. It soon turned out that white had no more than a repetition of checks when black took the piece (which he by the way was absolutely forced to do, hence white's sacrifice forced a draw from a much better position). Surviving this difficult black game by a medium miracle, but still of course also following great defencing efforts, Trygve Dahl might still make an IM-norm if winning both his remaining games.



Greenfeld vs Dahl

The Swedish junior duel between **Ludvig Carlsson (2374)** and **IM Jung Min Seo (2456)** started up like a heavyweight French Advance position, as black closed off the center with 6...c4 to castle long. All 32 pieces were still on the board after 16 moves. Then the kingside suddenly opened as white creatively sacrificed a bishop for two pawns to get passed e- and f-pawns. It worked out very well at least from a practical point of view as black found no plan for active counterplay, while white soon set in passed pawns into motion. Just before 40 moves white neatly decided the game by sacrificing his queen for black's rook on g8, within three moves winning back more material due to the marching pawns. Jung Min Seo had a fantastic start to this tournament, but following his second loss in a row he definitely cannot make his third and decisive GM-norm at Fagernes this year. Carlsson on the other hand has recovered very well following his slow start and might just complete his IM-title by passing 2400 if winning both the last rounds. No way to forget, Carlsson is in the fight for the moneyprizes as he is the only non-GM in the group at 5,0/9.



Carlsson vs Seo

**GM Gudmundur Kjartansson (2433)** as white went for a patient English fianchetto against **FM Fredrik Lindh (2296)**, but the position suddenly opened as black went for a tactical e5-break at move 10. Black eventually won back the pawn at e5, but white after exchanging queens still kept a pleasant edge in the endgame with rook, bishop and six pawns against rook, knight and six pawns. After the rooks left as well, the computers first reported the minor piece endgame to be equal. This however was based on moves that were much more difficult to find for black.



Kjartansson vs Lindh

Short of time Lindh just before 40 moves chose the wrong defensive plan, giving white the chance to create a passed h-pawn which soon decided in the fifth hour. Lindh following his second pole out loss is out as an IM norm candidate, while Kjartansson at an average result is still in the fight for a money prize

**IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2432)** versus **FM Mathias Unneland (2228)** was a closed Italian line in which both players spent a lot of time to reach a fairly balanced, but still lively position. From a better position Kaasen by 23.Rxe6!? creatively sacrificed a rook for bishop and pawn to play for a mating attack against black's king at g8. A tight and tense kingside battle followed as both players tried to mate their opponent's king while at the same time saving their own king. With both players short of time for 40 moves, black creatively (but still dubiously) sacrificed back an exchange on h3, after which white had a won position for a few moves. White in turn overlooked something of importance when sacrificing a knight for black's d4-pawn at move 38, as the remaining endgame with bishop and four pawns against rook and pawn was a safe draw. Unneland after surviving this mess is still in the run for an IM-norm, although he will need to win both the remaining rounds.



**Kaasen vs Unneland**

**FM Conor Murphy (2428)** as white against **Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2275)** entered a rather safe Classical Nimzo-Indian line, but then accelerated with 5.e4. Black obviously had the better preparations for the upcoming confrontation as white after 20 moves had spent 13 minutes and white 55 minutes. Black was a pawn up when forcing a queen exchange with 20... Qb2, although white due to his pair of bishops had some compensation. As Murphy ran short of time 13 year old Kvaløy kept up the pressure well. Before 40 moves he succeeded in promoting his passed c-pawn, forcing black to sacrifice his knight in the rook and knight endgame. Winning was still far from trivial as black's two pieces were pinned together in the c-file, while white only needed to exchange his three kingside pawns against black's two kingside pawns. Finding no way forward Kvaløy gave up all winning chances by sacrificing back the knight after 45 moves.



**Kvaløy vs Murphy**

**FM Elham Abdrlauf (2334)** versus **IM Marsel Efroimsky (2417)** was a Sicilian duel in which black came slightly ahead on the clock as well as on the board, and after 14 moves put her queen on c6 with a mating threat on g2. Strangely white underestimated the dangers fatally and just blundered with 15.Nf4??. Somehow overlooking that white could not save both the king and the knight after 15.--- Nxb3 16.axb3 e5!. White resigned after 29 moves as he was still just a piece down and would have to exchange some more pieces. Abdrlauf following this collapse was out as an IM-norm candidate, and not feeling able to concentrate properly he with acceptance of the arbiters withdrew before round 8 and 9.



**Abdrlauf vs Efroimsky**

Swedish **FM Theodor Kenneskog (2309)** and German **IM Robert Baskin (2398)** discussed a Sicilian Najdorf in which white castled long and sacrificed his pawn at d5 to open lines and diagonals for a kingside attack. Black in turn gave back his pawn at d6 to open the b-file against white's king. Not having to worry about his king after exchanging queens, white thanks to his pair of bishops had some pressure in a materially balanced endgame. White with two bishops and four pawns against bishop, knight and four pawns could well have played on after 40 moves, but instead accepted a draw by repetition. Kenneskog has a score well above expected but probably should have won this promising endgame really to have chances for an IM-norm – as he now needs to win both round 8 and 9.



**Kenneskog vs Baskin**

**FM Ward Altabosh (2177)** as black against **IM Julian Martin (2396)** went for an Owen's defence with 1.--- b6, after which white spent some 45 minutes on his first 11 moves. Although black had a nice knight square on d5, white got a space advantage due to his pawn at e5. Some more or less sound exchanges later the endgame with rook, bishop, knight and six pawns after 26 moves appeared drawish. Black however still had a strong knight on d5 plus chances for a queenside attack. While Martin ran short of time, Altabosh creatively opened the queenside and reached a won endgame with rook, knight and four pawns against rook, bishop and two pawns. Altabosh following this win joined the IM-norm run, but he will need at least 1,5/2 and possibly 2/2 in round 8 and 9.

German **FM Volker Seifert (2246)** and Norwegian **IM Erlend Mikalsen (2373)** today discussed a Classical Nimzo-Indian looking all the more like a Queen's Gambit Exchange line. White kept a slight edge although black was fine after exchanging the dark-squared bishops. Exchanging the two remaining minor pieces might have been misunderstood from a white point of view, as black got a pleasant attacking target on e3 while white's rook on c5 turned out to be misplaced. Captured in a crumbling cockpit, white tried to activate his rook by taking a pawn on a5. As white was running short of both minutes and moves, black efficiently opened the position around white's king at e2. Getting 40 more minutes on the clock did not help Seifert much today, as the black queen intervened on c2 with decisive effect.



**Seifert vs Mikalsen**

**Tobias Lang Nilsen (2271)** versus **Gustav Törnngren (2197)** was a closed Ruy Lopez which looked about balanced after the queens were exchanged early in the middle game. White for some moves was a pawn up in the rooks and minor pieces endgame, but black had compensation due to white's poor pawn structure. The end came just before 40 moves, with a double rook endgame in which white had to repeat checks to neutralize black's active rooks on the seventh rank



**Miezis vs Melaa**

**GM Normunds Miezis (2467)** as white against **Sondre Melaa (2117)** went for an English without fianchetto. Melaa first castled long, but then invited a queen exchange – which he achieved for the price of his e5-pawn. White later had a pawn more in the rook and bishop endgame, but black's position still was healthy as white's «queenside majority» included three isolated c-pawns. Having won back the pawn at c6, black even was better for a few moves before the players in the fifth hour locked down in a dead drawn bishop endgame.

The junior duel between **Mathias Lind Schouten (2166)** and **FM Karolis Juksta (2397)** started up with a French Tarrasch line in which black had an isolated pawn at d5, blocked by a strong knight on d4. Black probably still was fine as he had an active knight and a pair of bishops. Entering a double minor piece endgame with two knight against two bishops in this half open position reportedly was fine for white. He was however wrong to turn down the chance to exchange off black's last queenside pawn, since black within a few moves afterwards could force a minor piece endgame in which black's dominating bishop and active king soon decided.

**Ileysaa Bin-Suhayl (2168)** as black against **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2375)** bravely entered the same risky Queen's Indian line in which he castled too fast and lost within 15 moves two rounds ago.

It worked out much better today, although Ileysaa now waited too long to castle and overall played too slow, spending more than 90 minutes for the first 19 moves. On the board black kept an extra pawn, but white had more than sufficient compensation. The position

became all the more loaded as white sacrificed a second pawn to play for an attack against black's king, which still was a bit airy on b7. Black however succeeded in getting counterplay, and in a tense dynamite situation after the first time control both players had doubled their rook on the seventh rank. White creatively gave up his two rooks for a queen and successfully reached an apparently promising endgame with queen and three pawns against two rooks and one pawn. It is very difficult for a lone queen to overcome two coordinated rooks in such a position, and the game was drawn after six hours – as black's brave rooks had succeeded winning one of the white pawns and stopping the two others.



**Vestby-Ellingsen vs Bin-Suhayl**

**FM Noam Vitenberg (2305)** and **Sigurd Grøver (2105)** discussed a Queen's Gambit line with Bb4, in which three sets of minor pieces disappeared due to tactical exchanges before 20 moves. As black helpfully exchanged queens as well, white due to his better pawn structure came slightly better in the endgame with two rooks, bishop and five pawns on each side. White eventually won a pawn in this endgame, but very strangely offered a draw when he was a pawn up with very good chances to win after 41 moves.

**Brede Andre Hagen (1973)** as black against 15 year old **Shazil Shehzad (2249)** gave his Caro-Kann with 3...c5?! another try. It worked out fairly well as black was not much worse from the opening. The position however turned decisively in favour of white in between move 20 and 25, as black first gave up his b- and a-pawn and then just blundered a bishop.



**Hagen vs Shehzad**



**Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2111)** versus **Andre Gjestemoen von Hirsch (2192)** was a closed Grünfeld-Indian opening in which white established a space advantage on the queenside by playing c5. Black went for counterplay in the center by sacrificing a pawn with a tactical e5-break. Although lagging behind on the clock, black was fine on the board after white returned the pawn. As white somehow missed something of tactical importance, black later won a pawn and reached a close to won rook and bishop endgame. Strangely black just before 40 moves accepted a draw by repetition in a situation in which he was a passed pawn up and could play on without any fear of losing.

Norwegian **FM Øystein Bøyum Fossum (2302)** as white in a well known English fianchetto terrain got a promising pressure on Lithuanian junior **Pijus Greicius (2080)** from the opening, and in the early middle game succeeded in getting a direct kingside attack. White instructively sacrificed a knight on g5 to open the doors wide on the kingside, and kept a winning attack after black gave back the piece a few moves later on. During mutual time pressure the position looked exciting as black was an exchange up with two rather open kings. In retrospect it seems white and his powerful pieces all the time had a decisive attack, while white's king in reality was rather safe.



**Greicius vs Fossum**

**Vladan Nikolic (2216)** versus **Sergey Eliseev (2041)** was a Catalan in which black succeeded in hanging on his extra queenside pawn. Black first appeared to be fine if not better on the board, although he lagged far behind on the clock. The position suddenly turned in favour of white as he was allowed to play Ne5 and win back the pawn at c6. Black's situation became even more demanding as he after 20 moves had only three minutes left on the clock. The thematic 23.d5!?-break actually was inaccurate. As black failed to find the very difficult defence line, white still hit in at g7 and raised a decisive kingside attack within five more moves.



**Nikolic vs Eliseev**

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (1936)** and **Jacob Templen Grave (2202)** started up with a rather closed Caro-Kann. White got a space advantage due to his pawn at e5, but black still did fine due to his strong knight square on d5. 19.b4? was a loose pawn sacrifice which idea remained unclear, as white afterwards exchanged queens and entered a rook and bishop endgame with a very sound extra pawn more for black. White resigned a few moves later on, as he was about to lose the bishop due to an unpleasant d-file pin.

**Bennet Hagner (2133)** versus **Morten Andersen (2182)** started up like an old-fashioned Four Knights Defence, which became somewhat more modernistic as both players later weakened their pawn structure. After he got parking permission for a rook on the f4 outpost, black suddenly had a promising kingside attack running around move 22–25. Black cashed in a key pawn at e4, but failed to find the best way to continue the attack afterwards. Following this white won back the pawn at e5 with a fairly balanced position.

Both players missed that black could win about a rook and decide the game with a brilliant 29.--- Re4!! . Black actually lifted the rook from f4, but passed e4 and let it down on d4. As white replied 30.f4? black could have another very nice win with 30.--- Rxf4!. After he missed that chance as well, the players suddenly were in a materially balanced rook and knight endgame, in which white had a slight edge due to his more active king. After 48 moves the knight endgame with two pawns on each side looked very drawish, but white due to the more active king and his advanced d-pawn still had more chances. The decisive moment came when black should have played 50.--- Ke8! to activate his king and keep control on the square d7. Although tempting 50.--- f3? was a blunder, as white could play 51.Ne4! – to control the f2 square and divert black's knight from d7. After the white pawn crossed the d7 square, white had no problems winning the endgame with queen versus knight and seventh rank pawn.



**Westrum vs Skotheim**

**Andreas Skotheim (2146)** versus **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (1945)** saw an Italian opening in which white weakened his kingside with h3 and g4. Black creatively sacrificed an exchange to play f5 and open the kingside against white's king. Whether it was correct from a theoretical point of view is unclear, but anyway it worked out very well as black got a winning attack before 25 moves. Black however first failed to find the best continuation of

the attack, and then under time pressure in a messy position blundered with 30.--- Qc6?? – overlooking a straightforward 31.Rxg6! hxg6 32.Qd8+ with mate or half a ton of material up to follow.

**Christian Grundekjøn (2102)** against **Emils Mierins (2057)** started up with an English opening, in which white wasted too much time moving his queen around, hence black got a pleasant initiative after 12 moves. The course of the game however changed radically as black opened the position for white's bishop and left his knight on c5 in an unpleasant pin along the a3–f8 diagonal. White played well for a while and won a pawn at c5 with a clear advantage, but afterwards allowed black a lot of counterplay by some new strange queen maneuvers. Just before 40 moves black seemed close to a draw with queen, rook, knight and five pawns against queen, rook, bishop and six pawns. Black had the more active pieces while white's extra pawn was a rather double pawn at e3. Exchanging the rooks reportedly was fine for black, but later he became much too passive – giving white all the time needed first to create an attack against the black king and then to capture black's knight on c3.

**Sverre Lye (1858)** and **Laurin Perkampus (2076)** meanwhile discussed a rare Caro-Kann line without d4, in which black developed his pieces without any pressure and then picked up a pawn at c3 with his queen. As white found nothing better than exchanging off the queens afterwards, black came a sound pawn up in the rooks and minor piece endgame. The endgame first was difficult at best from a white point of view, and became so even more as his rook ended up more or less offside on h7. The endgame after the first time control became exciting again as white succeeded in freeing his rook and reduce the number of pawns down to two for white and three for black. The queenside pawn majority still gave black chances. Overlooking a tactical 54.---c4!, white anyway was in trouble again when he blundered a rook and resigned.



Perkampus vs Lye

**Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1995)** and **Afras Mansoor (1931)** played a strange line of a Queen's Pawn opening, in which white exchanged his pawn on e4 for the black pawn at b5.

After exchanging three sets of minor pieces white first had a slight initiative, but black instructively hit back in the center and after 25 moves had much more space. Having lost his backward pawn on c3, white in the rooks and bishop endgame after the time control had pushed his b-pawn to b6 and tried to exchange it for the black pawns at d5 and f5. Black after getting 40 minutes more on the clock soon found a way forward – exchanging the d5-pawn and a5-pawn for white's pawn at b6, to reach a double rook endgame in which black's within a few more moves got a decisive passed pawn at e2.



Rasmussen vs Mansoor

**Håkon Bentsen (2088)** versus **Max Dahl (2041)** was a Caro-Kann Exchange line in which white's pair of bishops gave him a plus in the middle game. White kept a slight initiative after black succeeded in exchanging one of the bishops, but although white still had a little more space the position with queen, two rooks and seven pawns on each side appeared drawish. 15 year old Dahl again ran short of time, but this time had got the position under control by then. A rook endgame all the more similar to a bankbox was agreed a draw within a few moves after the time control.



Dahl vs Bentsen

**Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2084)** and **Valentina Verbin (2023)** discussed another Classical Nimzo-Indian line in which black played a well known tactical Ne4-meaneuver under unfavourable circumstances, as white due to his better pawn structure had an advantage after the tactical queen exchange. As white played too slow afterwards black managed to open the kingside with counterplay against the white king, but she in turn allowed too many piece exchanges. White following this again had the better pawn structure and an advantage in the double rook endgame. Verbin however succeeded in activating her rooks and get counterplay against white's pawns. Black following this was a pawn up in the final position, which was drawn by repetition after 42 moves. White with a passed pawn at d6 and a rook behind the pawn at d3 still was in no danger of losing.

**Christian Tunge (2044)** gave his English fianchetto another try as white against **Andreas Tenold (1995)**, and this time got a pleasant pressure in the middle game due to black's isolated pawn on d5. Exchanging the good knight on c5 for a bad bishop at b7 was not an obvious choice, but white still had the better pawn structure and a pleasant pressure with queen, rook, bishop and six pawns against queen, rook, knight and six pawns. After the remaining rooks were exchanged black apparently had found a way to defend his pawns and keep the position closed. That was, until he suddenly removed the defender of his key pawn at a6 when playing 42.--- Qd7??. As the b5 pawn also was doomed without the protection from his a6 brother, white and his passed b-pawn later had an easy win.



Tunge vs Tenold

Finally **Simen Sørensen (1975)** versus **Terje Lund (2024)** was an accepted Benkö gambit in which black gradually got enough pressure on the queenside to compensate for white's extra pawn at a5. Black was better for some moves after winning back the pawn at c3, but lost the grip as he allowed white's passed pawn to reach a6. A draw following this was agreed in a probably drawish position just before move 40.

**IM Christian Köpke (2346)** used this last chance to request a walk over draw, and consequently **FM Richard Bjerke (2102)** had a win on walk over. Both will be back for round 8.

## Open Group

In the Open, second rated and 15 year old Estonian **Dion Krivenko (2045)** today won his white game against 45 year old Norwegian **Torbjørn Dahl (1876)** on the first board. White played 2.b3 in a French, but still got a pleasant edge from the opening due to his better pawn structure. Having picked up one of the weak black's pawn along the road, white probably was winning in the rook endgame. Still it was an exciting passed pawn race and Krivenko in the end won by escaping black's checks with queen and rook versus queen.



Krivenko – Dahl in the front and Kittilsen – Kreken in the back

Krivenko at 6.0/7 has to share the lead with also 15 year old **Eivind Grunt Kreken (1838)**, today winning by a crushing Sicilian counterattack as black against **Sigurd Kittilsen (1881)**.

Third board between **Max Moe Pedersen (1837)** and **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (1829)** was a hard-fought junior duel, in which 12 year old Fiskaaen in a slightly better queen and minor pieces endgame blundered a key pawn due to time pressure at move 40. The queen and bishop endgame remained exciting for one and a half hour more, before white could force a queen exchange to reach a won bishop endgame.

Eleven year old and heavily underrated Tromsø player **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1650)** again played inspired tactical chess as he mated his opponent **Jan Gunnar Fredriksen (1835)** after only 21 moves. Myagmarsuren following this is sharing the third place with Dahl and Pedersen at 5,5/7, only half a point behind Krivenko and Kreken.

While many young players are in the fight for the top three prizes, top rated **Egmond-Gabriel Dulman (2065)** is definitely out of it after he today lost a drawish double rook endgame as black against 18 year old **Amund Pihl Strand (1712)** on the fifth board.

A very happy surprise is that we will tomorrow also see a female player on the top boards in the Open: 17 year old Stavanger girl **Live Jørgensen Skigelstrand (1649)** as black against **Lars Tormod Haugen (1756)** won an exchange in the middle game, and went on to overcome white's barking bishops in the endgame.

Top three boards for round 8 following this will be Myagmarsuren–Krivenko, Kreken–Pedersen and Dahl–Skigelstrand.



Skigelstrand vs Haugen

Again the Open had relatively few surprises on the lower boards, but 14 year old **Elma Selvik (1352)** despite pressure on the clock after nearly sixth hour completed the win in an interesting rook endgame against **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1721)**.

Many underrated young players have won a lot of ELO this week. 18 year old **Ingvar Torjesen Kveim (1384)** from Kragerø has gained more than 100 points after he today safely realized a won endgame as black against our new Romanian chess friend **Tiberiu Orban (1731)**.



Selvik vs Rynning

No way to forget ten year old and unrated **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen** from Jæren, he now has a tournament performance close to 1700 after defeating the nearly 60 year old veteran **Terje Lie (1522)** today.



Lie vs Simonsen

Photos by Tom Eriksen