

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2021

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

8



GM Group

Round 8 made a dramatic start as GM Erik Blomqvist early in the middle game was reported close to winning against GM Tiger Hillarp in the Swedish duel on the top board. In the end this still became much of a waiting round as six out of the seven top boards, including the mentioned first board, were drawn. The only game winner on the top boards today became Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal, sacrificing a pawn for a lasting attack which he completed during mutual time pressure as black against GM Stellan Brynell.

We can still look forward to an exciting finish as Persson is now leading at 6,5/8, half a point ahead of Urkedal, Blomqvist and Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots. Top board duels coming up for round 9 will be Urkedal–Hillarp and Kulaots–Blomqvist. The remaining IM norm candidates did very well this round. Following this four players still have chances for a norm in round nine – although all of them will need a win then.

GM Erik Blomqvist (2518) woke up half a point behind **GM Tiger Hillarp (2521)** this morning as well, and consequently he after lunch played aggressively for a win as white in a Pirc opening. White's direct bayonet attack with 8.h4! was blocked as black played h5, but after castling long white was able to lock down black's attack on the queenside while regrouping for a new kingside attack. 24.--- Bb5? was a creative try to restart the counterattack on the queenside, but still backfired in his face as



Blomqvist vs Hillarp

white correctly sacrificed an exchange on e5 instead of taking the bishop. Blomqvist however spent much time without finding any of the winning plans after the exchange sacrifice, hence the game suddenly was drawn by a repetition of queen checks between g5 and h6 after 30 moves.

The Baltic duel between **GM Kaido Kulaots (2511)** and **GM Titas Stremavicius (2487)** meanwhile was a positional Sicilian duel in which white came up with nothing but sound exchanges, leaving after 15 moves a very balanced endgame with two rooks, one bishop and six pawns on each side. White's very slight initiative was worth about nothing due to the opposite-coloured bishops and the game was drawn without many dramatic moments after 35 moves.



Stremavicius vs Kulaots

Third board meeting between **GM Vitaly Kunin (2547)** and **GM Vahap Sanal (2585)** instead was drawn by queen checks between g5 and f6 following an intensive four-hour drama. The start was a positional Queen's Indian fianchetto, in which black after exchanging the fianchetto bishop was fine despite white's center control. Black succeeded in getting a lot of counterplay against the white center, and sacrificing an exchange with 27.Rxf6?! actually was dubious. Black however had to balance accurately on the wire to find the advantage. As he failed to do that, the game was drawn by a repetition of checks a few moves later on.



Kunin

GM Stellan Brynell (2431) versus **GM Frode Urkedal (2564)** saw an interesting test of the Marshall Attack in the Ruy Lopez opening, in which black before ten moves sacrifices a center pawn to open the position for a kingside attack. White in the short run successfully bolstered the kingside without returning the pawn, but black had some compensation and a tense four-hour struggle followed. Urkedal's strategy worked out in the long term as Brynell had the much more difficult position when both players ran short of time. White still needed a very accurate defence when he at move 39 blundered a piece. Urkedal succeeded in defeating one solid Swedish GM today, but still must defeat one more tomorrow to win the tournament this year. He will however then get the white pieces against Hillarp.



Brynell vs Urkedal

Ludvig Carlsson (2374) as black against **IM Frode Elsness (2465)** went for the rare but still far from harmless Albin's Counter Gambit with 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5?!. White's extra pawn at e5 remained loose after an early queen exchange, but as black won back the pawn at move 18 white still kept an edge due to his pair of bishops. In an open position with pawns on both wings, white for some moves had strong pressure in the endgame with two bishops and four pawns versus bishop, knight and four pawns. Elsness however was too careless when exchanging pawns, after which black in the end could sacrifice his knight on the last white pawn to reach a drawn endgame with one bishop against two bishops.

Carlsson already has three IM-norms, hence his motivation for trying to get a fourth one by defeating top rated GM Vahap Sanal tomorrow might not be best. Sanal however is expected to play for a win even with black due to his tournament situation. If able to win that game with the white pieces, Carlsson at 2399 will be a very short step away from completing his IM-title.



Elsness vs Carlsson (front) and Efroimsky vs Greenfeld (back)

The game between **IM Marsel Efroimsky (2417)** and **GM Alon Greenfeld (2509)** was drawn within 15 moves and 15 minutes in a very equal position with two rooks, two bishops and seven symmetric pawns on each side. The final position is memorable for an unusual motive with four bishops in the d-file, as white had her bishops on d3 and d4, while black had his on d5 and d6.

Greenfeld is the long time coach of Efroimski and it was very unfortunate they had to play each other after travelling all the way from Israel. Still the organizer of course cannot make any exceptions from computer pairings, and both players of course understood that.

IM Erlend Mikalsen (2373) as white in a Modern against **GM Gudmundur Kjartansson (2433)** played without any respect in the opening with 4.h3, 5.g4 and 9.g5. White had much more space in the opening and after playing f4–f5 he sacrificed an exchange at f5 to open the kingside. Black however came up with counterplay on the queenside and after tactical exchanges was a pawn up with rook, knight and four pawns against rook, bishop and three pawns in the endgame after 28 moves. White’s passed d-pawn and active pieces still kept the position in balance, and draw was agreed by an airy repetition after 43 moves. This intense game lasted only just above three hours, as Mikalsen against was nearly one hour ahead on the clock.



Mikalsen vs Kjartansson

FM Trygve Dahl (2249) versus **FM Ward Altarbosh (2177)** was a meeting between two young IM norm candidates and was expected to be a long and hard-fought game. Instead black won within 16 moves and 90 minutes. The position after 13 moves apparently was fairly balanced, although Altarbosh again did well with a knight on d5 from his Owen’s opening. 14.Bc1? from white then was careless, overlooking 14.--- f5! with a kingside initiative for black. 15.Nd2?? was a blunder as black could play 15.--- Nf4 threatening both the queen on e4 and the pawn at g2. Then after 16.Qe3 Bg5! (threatening 17.--- Nh3+) white stopped the clock as black would win heavy material.



Dahl

Altarbosh following this win for norm purposes had an Elo performance of exactly 2450, but as his last round opponent IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen has «only» 2432, he still needs to win that game with the white pieces to make it. To make an IM-norm at 6,0/9, average ELO 2325 are needed on the opponents. Altarbosh this time was very unlucky with the pairings as he will need 6,5/9 against an average of 2323. A former member of Syria’s National Team now representing Norway, Altarbosh is currently rated below 2200 – hence his tournament result will be remarkable whatever the result in last round.

IM Jung Min Seo (2456) versus **Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2275)** was a Queen's Gambit in which black for some moves had a pair of bishops, but following some tactical exchanges a draw was agreed in a very balanced position with queen, two rooks, bishop, knight and six pawns on each side after 19 moves.

Both players were disappointedly without title norm chances before the start of the second to last round and this probably affected the motivation for two young lions we will hear much more about soon.



Seo vs Kvaløy

IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2432) as white against **FM Noam Vitenberg (2305)** went for a Caro-Kann line without d4, in which white sacrificed a pawn on e4 to play for an initiative with two bishops against two knights. White indeed got a strong initiative, turning into a decisive kingside attack as he was allowed to break in the center with d5 and then hit in with a rook sacrifice at g7. White within a few moves won back the invested material with interest, leading to a position in which he was two passed pawns up. Black resigned before 40 moves as white's passed d- and e-pawns won a piece.

FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2274) versus **FM Conor Murphy (2428)** was another modern and muddy Queen's Gambit Exchange line with a black bishop on b4. The opening hardly qualified as a success from a white point of view, as black after a violent kingside pawn storm with f5, g5 and gxf4 came better before 15 moves. As Murphy spent much time and still did not find all the best moves in a complex position, white however proved able to hide his king on f1 and achieve counterplay against black's king on b7.



Ingebretsen vs Murphy

Black probably should not have allowed 25.Rxb7!, but when he did so he should definitely not have taken the rook. As he did take the rook, white within a few moves won back a knight on c6 with a winning attack. White in turn failed to find the best continuation of the attack afterwards, hence the position reportedly was in very dynamic balance before black with seconds left on the clock blundered with 35.--- Kf8? (instead of 38.--- Kf6!). This time Ingebretsen efficiently used his chance to win material, and Murphy was a bishop down with a king under fire when he stopped the clock after 48 moves.

Ingebretsen following this nice win again has a performance above 2400. He still has chances for an IM-norm but was somewhat unlucky with the pairings for last round. GM Gudmundur Kjartansson is a very different opponent to defeat with the black pieces, and at the same time too low rated for a draw to be sufficient.

The Sicilian Najdorf opening probably was about balanced in the game between **IM Robert Baskin (2398)** and **Shazil Shehzad (2249)**. Black after castling long and taking control over the h-file was fine if not better with queen, rook, bishop, knight and six pawns against queen, rook, two knights and six pawns after 20 moves. Leaving the h-file to win a pawn at g5 later might have been dubious, as white got a lot of counterplay after intervening on f7 with his queen. The position remained unclear and tactically loaded after white won back



Beskin vs Shehzad

the pawn with 32.Nxe5. Although white was the player short of time after 35 moves he still made the better calculations as black went astray with the exchange sacrifice 36.--- Rxa4?. Black's idea remains mysterious as white just cashed in the exchange and then forced an exchange of queens, to reach a won endgame within a few more moves.

Lithuanian **FM Karolis Juksta (2397)** as white against Norwegian **Tobias Lang Nilsen (2271)** established a big space advantage after realizing e4 followed by f4 in a Benoni opening. The pressure increased as white before move 20 pushed through the classical and critical e5-break, although black suddenly got counterplay against the white king after white too fast continued forward with 22.e6?!. With both players running short of time black in turn made a decisive blunder with 24.--- Be3?, as white could then play 25.e7+ with a winning attack.



Nilsen vs Juksta

The final position became a massive win for white as he elegantly sacrificed his his queen with 33.Qxe3!. Realizing that he could not reply with the planned 33.--- Qh6xe3 due to 34.Rxh7 mate, black about to lose on time instead blundered his own queen.

FM Mathias Unneland (2228) versus **FM Theodor Kenneskog (2309)** not unexpectedly became a firework game, as both players needed a full point to candidate for an IM-norm in the last round. The start was a long theory duel in the razor blade Botvinnik line of the Semi-Slav opening. Black in this line, after snatching an exchange at f1, sacrifices a piece for white's passed pawn at e7 – and then an exchange on g5. The mess in this game produced a highly unclear position with queen, rook, knight and five pawns on each side. Black reportedly was better for some moves due to his pawn at c3, but the advantage ironically switched to white when the pawn continued forward to c2. White appeared to have the better opening preparation and played much faster than black. He got his reward as black lost the thread in the final moves before 40. Unneland by accurate calculations snatched the pawn at c2 and after a queen exchange soon marched his kingside passed pawn forward to decide the rook endgame.

Kenneskog has contributed a lot to the entertainment of this tournament and still has a plus result, but is out as an IM norm candidate following this loss. Unneland following his strong play in the last rounds has a second IM norm at Fagernes within reach, but this year needs a win in the last round. Norm hunter Unneland was somewhat unlucky to get an opponent as solid and experienced as IM Marsel Efroimski in this situation, but on the other hand he was very lucky to get the white pieces also in round 9.



Unneland vs Kenneskog

Jacob Templen Grave (2202) as white against **GM Normunds Miezis (2467)** went for an ambitious Sämisch line in the Nimzo-Indian opening, and due to the classical pawn chain c4–d5–e4–f3 got a promising space advantage. As white spent much time without finding the best plan in the early middle game, black was able to get counterplay on the queenside with b5–bxc4 and on the kingside with f5–fxe4. Black first got an initiative due to the f-file, but then switched to the c-file and before 40 moves intervened on c1 with a decisive attack soon to follow.



Miezis vs Grave

Andre Gjestemoen von-Hirsch (2192) and **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2375)** reached a symmetric and rather drawish pawn structure after white exchanged with 8.dxe5 dxe5 in a positional Ruy Lopez variation. Black got the pair of bishops after exchanging his knight for white's light-squared bishop on b3, but the position remained rather closed and white kept a slight advantage due to his strong knight on c5. As the knight was exchanged for a bishop on e6 the position became very equal. White due to his safer king came better after black opened the queenside in the queen and bishop endgame, but von-Hirsch again was satisfied to draw a much higher rated player from a somewhat better position



Vestby-Ellingsen vs von-Hirsch

Gustav Törngren (2197) as white against **IM Julian Martin (2396)** first appeared slightly better in an English fianchetto line, but black hit back in the e-file and took over the initiative. Having won the white pawns at d3 and e2, black had the rook endgame with two extra pawns under reasonable control.

Ileysaa Bin-Suhayl (2168) versus **FM Øystein Bøyum Fossum (2302)** started as a Queen's Gambit Tarrasch line. After three sets of minor pieces were exchanged, the players before 20 moves reached a fairly balanced position with an isolated but well-protected black pawn at d4. The position looked drawish after black's d-pawn was exchanged against white's e-pawn, but black kept a pleasant initiative with the more active pieces. As both players were about to run short of time, black suddenly was winning after white placed one of his rooks in a pin at d1 and the other one in an offside position at g5. White made a creative try to free his rook with a pawn storm on the kingside, but black made the better calculations and cashed in a piece well before 40 moves.

Swedish **FM Fredrik Lindh (2296)** and German **Bennet Hagner (2133)** meanwhile discussed a Caro-Kann Advance line, in which white kept a pleasant edge from the opening. After the queens were exchanged before 20 moves, white due to his pressure against black's pawn at a6 had a clear advantage with two rooks, bishop, knight and six pawns on each side. Exchanging the knight for a bishop here was a serious mistake from a black point of view, as white's knight on c5 later was much better than black's bishop at g6. White following this soon was able to cash in the pawn at a6 with his rooks, and due to his passed b-pawn had no problems winning the remaining minor piece endgame.

FM Volker Seifert (2246) as white against **Andreas Skotheim (2146)** went for a positional Bogo-Indian opening in which white (as usual in the Bogo-Indian) first had a slight plus. 15... c5?! was a critical moment as the counterbreak 16.e4! could have given white a strong initiative. As white missed that chance black could play 16... c4! and exchange the light-squared bishops with the better position. White again came better a few moves later as black helpfully exchanged the knights on g5, opening the f-file for white's heavy pieces. White in turn helped black also to open the f-file by exchanging a rook on e6, hence the chances were again balanced around move 30. As white was about to run short of time he underestimated the dangers when black invited an exchange of queen and rook in the f-file. Maybe white could still have scraped a draw, but the remaining knight endgame due to his queenside pawn majority and better pawn structure was much better for black. Skotheim apparently played very well in this endgame, and after picking up white's loose pawn at g5 he instructively went around to the queenside to escort in his b-pawn after five hours.



Seifert vs Skotheim

Sondre Melaa (2117) as white against **Vladan Nikolic (2216)** went for a lively Scotch opening without castling short, but soon found his king in hot water due to the open d-file.

After 23 moves the king at c1 still looked pretty scared, and Nikolic following an original knight sacrifice on a2 opened the b-file to mate with 26.--- Qb1.



Nikolic vs Melaa

The teenager duel between German **Laurin Perkampus (2076)** and Norwegian **Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2111)** was a rare Semi-Slav line with 4.Qb3. Black was fine after exchanging at c4 to realize the e5-break, and came better as white gave up the e4-square with an overambitious 14.f4?!. White later had a pair of bishops, but black had a strong knight on e4 and eventually won a pawn at a2. Black made the rook and minor piece endgame more interesting by taking the weak pawn at e3 instead of the key pawn at b2, which would have given him two connected passed pawns on the queenside. The rook endgame with an extra b-pawn for black still was painful at best from a white point of view. Øye-Strømberg in an inspired mood creatively gave up his b-pawn to win a pawn on the kingside. Rook endgames with two against three kingside pawns usually will be drawn, but white's weak pawn at f5 made this one very difficult and black went on to reach a won position with two extra pawns in the fifth hour.

Brede Andre Hagen (1973) has been doing very well with white this tournament, and today continued the success with a draw against **IM Christian Köpke (2346)**. The start was an exciting Sicilian Dragon duel, in which white castled long and black short. The attacking race ended early as the queens were exchanged after 18 moves. Afterwards white first had a slight edge due to his pair of bishops, and after exchanging the dark-squared bishops he eventually won a pawn at e7.



Hagen vs Köpke

Black's nice knight on e5 combined with the active rooks gave him sufficient compensation, and after white returned the pawn at b3 the rook endgame with four pawns on each side was drawish. Black made a try to play for a win, but as white defended well the game was drawn by a repetition within a few moves after the first time control.

Sigurd Grøver (2105) versus **Mathias Lind Schouten (2166)** was a short, intense and highly original Queen's Gambit. White after playing 7.--- Nh5 (to exchange white's bishop on f4) either blundered or made a creative sacrifice with 8.--- Re8?! The computers immediately gave white a clear plus and the queen on d8 indeed was trapped after 9.Bxh7+! Kxh7 10.Ne5 Nxf4 11.Nxf7. 12.Ke2? instead of 12.Kd2! however was a blunder from white, as black then got three minor pieces for the queen instead of two. Black following this soon had a larger army. White stopped the clock as black with a tactical 15.--- e5 (threatening to win back the queen on d1 with Bg4+) was about to open a decisive attack against white's king.

Afras Mansoor (1931) as white against **Christian Grundekjøn (2102)** opted out of the long theory discussions with 2.Bg5, but black came better from the opening after he was allowed to disturb white's queenside pawn structure by a bishop exchange on c3. As black had a hard struggle finding an active plan in a closed position, white due to his center advantage and half open f-file came better in the late middle game. Black's 34.--- f6? reportedly could have been brilliantly refuted if white (with his queen hanging on g5) had played 35.Ng4!, but as he instead took the pawn at g6 with his queen, black soon got disturbing counterplay in the g-file and won back the pawn at g3. White could play on by exchanging his pawn at e4 for the black pawn at d6, but as this now involved a notable risk of losing, he instead forced a draw by checking between f6 and h6.



Mansoor vs Grundekjøn

Morten Andersen (2182) hit back after losing a turbulent game yesterday by winning a turbulent game against **Christian Tunge (2044)** today. White due to his extra pawn first was reported better in this Benkő Gambit duel, but black creatively sacrificed two more pawns at e7 and d6, and got powerful counterplay in the a- and b-file as well as in the diagonal h8-a1. Both players overlooked that black had a brilliant tactical win 24.--- Nb4!, overloading the strained with queenside forced with a rook on a2 and a pair of bishops at b1 and c3. Black instead took an exchange on f2 and a few moves later found the Nb4-trick. Then the tactics however had turned in favour of white. Although the queens were still on the board Andersen had no problems winning the remaining endgame with two knights and two pawns for a rook.

Pijus Greicius (2080) went for a fianchetto line against the Dutch Leningrad opening of **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (1945)**. White first got a positional grip and then also a material advantage after black very loosely sacrificed his g-pawn. For a few moves there was a tense struggle on the kingside, but then white got the necessary help to exchange of the rooks and win black's advanced pawn at f3. Black resigned after 25 moves as he was two pawns down with the more open king and the less active pieces.

Emils Mierins (2057) as white against **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1936)** went for a Ruy Lopez, and black chose a closed and slow variation in which all 32 pieces were still on board after 16 moves. White had however then got the much more active positions for his kingside pieces, and won a pawn by hitting in at h6 afterwards. As white later took the safe road, black survived the attack, but the endgame with rook, bishop and six pawns against rook, knight and five pawns still was painful from a black point of view. After black accepted to exchange rooks the minor piece endgame probably was just lost, as white could create a distant passed pawn due to his extra h-pawn. Black with two against three pawns were close to a draw, but still lost in the minor piece endgame, when he exchanged down to a lost pawn endgame after 56 moves.

Sergey Eliseev (2041) versus **Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1995)** became the last game to finish this round, but after 5 hours and 45 minutes it after all ended up with a win for white. Eliseev was declared likely to win before two hours as he in a Ruy Lopez opening got the chance to sacrifice two pieces for rook and pawn under favourable circumstances. White however missed the best moves and plans afterwards. As white gave up his attacking chances by exchanging queens, black after 20 moves was clearly better with one rook, two bishops, two knights and five pawns against two rooks, bishop, knight and seven pawns. The position was double-edged and white for a while succeeded to activate his pieces, but just before 40 moves black still reached a close to winning endgame with rook, two bishops and three pawns against two rooks and three pawns. White still had some counterplay due to his active rook and center pawns. As black short of time placed his bishops on the wrong squares, he just before 40 moves had trapped his own bishop at a8 and had to give it up for two white pawns. The remaining endgame with rook, bishop and three pawns against two rooks and one pawn after four hours still looked drawish, and although black had a weak pawn structure he should definitely not lose the position with rook, bishop and three pawns against two rooks without pawns one hour later on. Still that was what happened as black after 61 moves lost his concentration for one move and blundered the bishop. The rare endgame with two rooks against one rook without any pawns was seen for a few minutes in the end, but this was a trivial win for win as black's king was already trapped on the kingside.

FM Richard Bjerke (2102) and **Simen Sørensen (1975)** via 1.c4 transposed into a good old Queen's Gambit Exchange line, in which white came slightly better after placing his knight on e2. Black defended actively with a c5 break, reaching an isolated queen pawn position in which white had only a slight plus, as black had some counterplay against the backward white pawn at e3. White's advantage suddenly became close to winning as black at move 28 strangely took back a knight on e6 with his pawn, closing the e-file for black's rook and weakening further his double g-pawns. Instead of mobilizing his pieces for an attack against the exposed black king on f7, white decided to exchange as many pieces as possible before the time control. As white helpfully gave black a passed pawn at c4 when exchanging of the rooks, the advantage anyway was gone when a draw was agreed in a balanced position with queen, rook and six pawns on each side after 38 moves.



Sørensen vs Bjerke

The game between **Valentina Verbin (2023)** and **Håkon Bentsen (2088)** was some King's Bishop opening relative in which white's efforts to open the kingside first gave black some advantage. Before 30 moves all the minor pieces however were exchanged and the players reached a fairly balanced position with queen, two rooks and six pawns on each side. White was slightly better due to her passed pawn at d5 and queenside pawn majority, and consequently played on the passed d-pawn. After succeeding in exchanging of the queens black however got too active rooks. The game instructively ended with a draw just before 40 moves, as black had doubled his rooks on the second rank and was ready to give perpetual check with Rxh2+-Rg2+-Rf2+ etc when white promoted her d-pawn.



Verbin vs Bentsen

Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2084) as white against **Sverre Lye (1858)** went for an English fianchetto. Black was allowed to establish a center advantage with a pawn on e4, restricting white's bishop on g2, but white still was slightly better due to his c-file pressure. White kept a slight edge due to the better pawn structure after the queens were exchanged on c6. Black's situation appeared critical in the rooks and bishop endgame just before 40 moves, as the c6 pawn was about to fall. White however was inaccurate in his timing when taking the pawn, allowing black to eliminate the remaining queenside pawns and escape into a drawn rook and bishop endgame with three kingside pawns left on each side.



Lye vs Roulet-Dubonnet

Finally **Max Dahl (2041)** versus **Andreas Tenold (1995)** was a Queen's Indian with 4.Bf4, ending up close to a Queen's Gambit as black soon played d5. Black put his bishop on b4 and helpfully exchanged it for a knight on c3, after which white's c-file pressure and pin of the knight on c6 soon gave him strong pressure. Black delayed his castling for too long when the queenside opened. 1-0 after 17 moves as black eventually succeeded in castling, but lost his knight on c6 for next to no compensation.

As the GM group has 67 players left following the recent withdrawal of **FM Elham Abdrlauf (2334)**, **Terje Lund (2024)** had to take a walk over win in round 8. Lund will be back for round 9, but **Laurin Perkampus (2076)** had to leave for Germany before the start of the last round. **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (1945)** also will lose on a walk over then as he did not feel fit to play after round 8.

Open Group

On the first board in the Open, eleven year old **Evsuld Mygmarsuren (1650)** played a sound positional game and kept the balance all the way to a drawn rook endgame against **Dion Krivenko (2045)**.



Mygmarsuren vs Krivenko (front) and Kreken vs Pedersen (back)

15 year old Krivenko following this result nearly lost his shared lead as **Eivind Grunt Kreken (1838)** in the fourth hour was reported close to winning as white against **Max Moe Pedersen (1837)**. As Kreken lost control on the position when running short of time, the second board game in the end also ended with a hard-fought draw.

The third board was an exciting five-hour struggle in which **Torbjørn Dahl (1876)** as white was clearly better most of the game against **Live Jørgensen Skigelstrand (1649)**.

As white played some 30 moves with two rooks for a queen the game still was complex, and 17 year old Skigelstrand due to her passed pawn at a3 well into the fifth hour had a draw within reach in the endgame before finally losing.



Dahl vs Skigelstrand

While fourth board game **Askild Brønmo (1637) – Amund Pihl Strand (1712)** and sixth board **Nicolai Østensen (1768) – Jon Arne Stokhaug (1861)** both were draws, **Sigurd Kittilsen (1881)** following two lost games hit back by winning on the fifth board as black against **Tormod Carlin (1554)**.

Talented juniors **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (1829)** and **Ask Amundsen (1816)** also are back on the track after winning long and exciting games.

The sensation today was 18 year old **Ulrikke Langvik (1542)** striking back from a lost endgame position to win as black against top rated **Egmond-Gabriel Dulman (2065)**.

Ten year old **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen** has surprised us too many times to be a surprise any more this week. I guess his draw (from a winning position) as black against **Jan Gunnar Fredriksen (1835)** qualifies as further progress despite Fredriksen's very strange opening choices (today 1.a3).

A surprise on the lower boards came as **Ole Jacob Johnsen (1483)** neatly captured the queen of his opponent **Tiberiu Orban (1731)**.

We look forward to an exciting finish also in the Open, as Eivind Grunt Kreken, Dion Krivenko and Torbjørn Dahl are sharing the lead at 6,5/8 – only half a point ahead of Max Moe Pedersen and Evsuld Mygmarsuren.

15 year old Kreken might qualify as a slight favourite for the first place as he so far has the best Buchholz, the best Elo performance and the advantage of playing white against Dahl, but Krivenko will play white as favourite against unpredictable and underrated Max Moe Pedersen.

Evsuld Mygmarsuren following his strong play in the second half of this tournament now is a dark horse in the fight for top three, and might become the youngest player to qualify for the GM-group at Fagernes if he can win as black against Ask Amundsen. That however is no way an easy task following Asks play so far.



From the Open group



Fredriksen vs Simonsen

Photos by Tom Eriksen