

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2021

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 9



### GM Group

First board meeting between Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal and Swedish GM Tiger Hillarp in the last round became a not too exciting 16-move draw, as Hillarp won the opening duel and was well satisfied to finish undefeated at 7,0/9. The rest of the top boards however became a great farewell firework for this tournament, as 11 out of the top next 12 boards got a winner (while the last game was drawn due to lack of pieces after six hours and some 80 moves!). The Swedish triumphs continued all the way to the prize giving, as first and second prizes were shared between GM Tiger Hillarp and GM Erik Blomqvist. Blomqvist today won a hard-fought attacking battle as black against so far solid Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots, and following this also finished undefeated at 7,0/9.

The top rated players dominated in the end as third, fourth and fifth prizes at 6,5/9 were shared between second rated Norwegian GM Urkedal, first rated Turkish GM Vahap Sanal and third rated German GM Vitaly Kunin – the two latter winning long endgames as black today.

The tournament including 68 players in the GM group and 64 in the Open overall was

a success. Still it was of course a disappointment that no player succeeded in making a title norm, after all the four candidates for IM-norms lost in the final round. As news requests from Sweden were all of the time about whether any of the FMs still had chances for IM norms, while two Swedish GMs in the end won the top two prizes and made outstanding performances, one might wonder whether the focus on new title norms nowadays is too big compared to the tournament outcome.



Winner Hillarp and runner-up Blomqvist, both from Sweden

On the first board **GM Frode Urkedal (2564)** and **GM Tiger Hillarp (2521)** discussed some kind of delayed Queen's Gambit Accepted, in which white won back the pawn at b5 and then exchanged the black pawn at c4 by playing b3. Players following this reached a position reminding about the well known Semi-Slav Meran line. Something somehow went wrong for white as black held a pleasant initiative after 16 moves, when he was about to realize the c5-break with a lot of counterplay against white's center pawns at d4 and e5.



Urkedal vs Hillarp

Leading alone at an outstanding 6,5/8, the Tiger after another opening success chickened out with a draw offer, which Urkedal was in no position to reject.

Fourth rated Hillarp following this assured himself a first place on the list, but at the same time made it possible for a game winner on the second board to share the first and second prize money.

After this draw Hillarp finished at 7,0/9 with a great performance of 2671, winning 17 Elo-points. 28 year old Urkedal lost a game at Fagernes this year, but still could be well satisfied with a shared third prize and performance of exactly 2600.



Kulaots vs Blomqvist

The second board duel between **GM Kaido Kulaots (2511)** and **GM Erik Blomqvist (2518)** was a positional Sicilian line in which both players castled short, after which white went for a kingside attack with f4–f5. Chances during a tense battle gradually turned during the third and fourth hour, as black coolly placed his king on h8 and opened the g-file for his rooks. White following this anyway was in trouble when he blundered with 25.Qf1? Trading queen and pawn for two rooks often will be fine, but in this position it was a disaster as black

soon had a winning attack after 25.--- Rxc2! 26.Qxc2 Rxc2 27.Kxc2 d5! With Kaido running short of moves and minutes, Blomqvist efficiently finished the attack before move 40.

Silent and focused Blomqvist following this shared first prize at 7,0 with a performance of 2648, winning 15 Elo-points and suddenly recovering following a year with performances below average. The Estonian giant Kulaots of course wasted much by losing his first game in the last round, but at 6,0/9 he still finished sixth in the tournament and won a couple of Elo-points. Curiously Hillarp turned 51 the day after this prize giving, while Blomqvist turned 31 two days later.



Carlsson vs Sanal

**Ludvig Carlsson (2374)** and **GM Vahap Sanal (2585)** on board three discussed a closed Catalan line in which black came slightly better after white exchanged off a knight on e4 and put his king on f1. After three sets of minor pieces were exchanged, the position after 17 moves still was close to equal. Having evacuated his king to h2, white due to his d-file control even had a slight initiative around move 20–25. Black’s search for counterplay in the h-file reportedly was dubious, but still worked out as white turned down the critical line when not

accepting the rook sacrifice after 26.--- Rxh4+?! The endgame with rook, bishop and six pawns on each side later was drawish, but the GM now controlled the d-file and just before 40 moves left a repetition to play on for a kingside attack. Sacrificing the bishop for three pawns probably was the correct plan to save a draw for white. As Carlsson played it with inaccurate timing, the GM in the fifth hour succeeded in reaching a won endgame with rook, bishop and one pawn against rook and three scattered white pawns.

23 year old Vahap Sanal lost the first prize out of sight when losing to Blomqvist in round sixth. Making 2,5/3 later on he still reached a third prize and won a few more Elo-points – continuing his climbing against the 2600 mark. 18 year old Carlsson could have made an IM-norm if winning the last round, but this was not too important as he already had the three required norms. Winning five more Elo-points at Fagernes despite this last round loss he was in the November list at 2372, lacking «only» 28 points to get the IM title.

**GM Titas Stremavicius (2487)** versus **GM Vitaly Kunin (2547)** was an English opening soon turning complex. Black appeared to have made the much better preparation, as he played faster also when playing a far from obvious tactical 8.--- Nd4! After all the knights were exchanged black got a pleasant initiative. As white went for counterplay with a pawn storm on the kingside, the position still was double-edged when white blundered with 20.0-0? – overlooking a tactical 20.--- Bxb2! 21.Bxb2 Qxd2 with a double attack on white’s bishops. Black following this soon came two pawns up in the remaining queen and rooks position, and as he also had the more safe king, Kunin had few problems completing the win later on. 38 year old Kunin got a slow start following a first round walk over draw. 6,0/8 later on qualified for a shared third prize in the tournament and won back seven Elo-points following his disappointing result in Stavanger. 23 year old Stremavicius had saved a few Elo-points from earlier rounds, and landed on an expected score despite this set back.



Kunin vs Stremavicius

**FM Ward Altarbosh (2177)** and **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2432)** discussed a complex Sicilian Najdorf position in which black demonstrated the better preparation and/or understanding, getting a pair of bishops and an all the more dominating position after castling long. Unwilling to give up his e4-pawn, white instead gave black a totally dominating position when he was allowed to double his rooks in the open d-file after 23 moves. Black spent too much time admiring his own position and allowed some unnecessary counterplay later on. White still was under hard pressure all of the time and before 40 moves drifted into a totally lost rook endgame with two extra pawns for black. 19 year old Kaasen at 6.0/9 with a performance of 2421 made his expected score following this win. Underrated and unpredictable Altarbosh, now aged 26, despite this loss can be very well satisfied with his 2400 performance and won more than 50 Elo-points.

**GM Alon Greenfeld (2509)** versus **IM Robert Baskin (2398)** from 1.d4 d6 transposed into some kind of Dutch Leningrad variation. White spent nearly 70 minutes for the first 13 moves, but came somewhat better with a double fianchetto set up. As black with 13... b5? became too desperate for counterplay, white more or less decided the game with a well timed 15.d5! – winning a knight on c6 in exchange for the bishop at b2. Black for a few moves got a pair of bishops, but as the bishop on b2 was locked in black soon had to sacrifice an exchange. Greenfeld in an inspired mood immediately sacrificed back the exchange to reach an overwhelming position with an extra pawn and all the more active pieces. 1–0 after 51 moves means Greenfeld won a small money prize while losing a few points of Elo, and aged 57 he was by far the oldest player on top ten. 22 year old Baskin never really came back on track following a difficult start, and definitely hoped for more than a 2259-performance from his first tournament in Norway.

The generation duel between 18 year old **FM Karolis Juksta (2397)** and 48 year old **IM Frode Elsness (2465)** was another provocative Queen's Gambit with 3... a6?! Black was fine in an isolated Queen's Pawn position after 15 moves, and then greedily advanced with g5 to snatch a pawn at g3. As white's pieces got active counterplay against the weakened black kingside, black returned the pawn to reach an endgame with rook, knight and five pawns against rook, bishop and five pawns. The better pawn structure and more active king still gave black a plus. Juksta sacrificed a pawn without finding much counterplay and was reported lost after the time control. Although black had two isolated b-pawns, his position was a fairly easy win with rook, knight and three pawns against rook, bishop and one pawn after 55 moves. Then it seems Elsness just blundered his vital passed pawn at b3, after which white's active pieces suddenly gave him good practical chances for a draw. Running short of time Elsness after six hours tried to sacrifice his knight to advance the two remaining pawns, but Juksta at this stage made the better calculations and efficiently demonstrated the draw with bishop against b- and h-pawn. Both players following this draw finished just below their expected score. Juksta still made a remarkable recovery in the second half of the tournament, after a nightmare start with 1,5/4.

**GM Gudmundur Kjartansson (2433)** versus **FM Jens Ingebretsen (2274)** was a somewhat untraditional Slav opening in which both players weakened their pawn structure, as white after 16 moves struggled with two isolated h-pawns and black with two isolated e-pawns. Although he had a slightly awkward king on f1, white came better due to his strong bishop at b2 and pressure against the black pawn at e4. Black succeeded getting some disturbing counterplay in the f-file, but following tactical exchanges white still came a pawn up in the rook and minor piece endgame.

Accepting an exchange of rooks might have been the decisive mistake from a black point of view, as white and his more active king had few problems winning the endgame with bishop and five pawns against knight and four pawns.

33 year old Kjartansson saved his Elo and won a small money prize following this win. 17 year old Ingebretsen although missing his IM norm chance could be well satisfied with a performance close to 2400 and some 30 new Elo-points.



Mikalsen vs Brynell

**IM Erlend Mikalsen (2373)** versus **GM Stellan Brynell (2431)** was a Classical French duel in which black forgot and/or mixed up something, entering a dubious line with 11.--- cxd4? in which white got a clear advantage due to his center pawns and knight on d6.

Black tried to complicate by sacrificing a knight for two pawns at e5, but although thematic this proved insufficient, as black in this position lacked resources for an attack afterwards.

After finding a safe square for his king on d2, white soon could exchange down to a won endgame and the game surprisingly finished with a two-hour win for white.

Never a fan of handling black pieces just after breakfast, Brynell according to himself was lost before he woke up today. Curiously, about the last serious test of this rare opening line before this game was the game Mikalsen versus Brynell from Fagernes 2016 – when Brynell played the correct 11.--- f6! and went on to win in 22 moves.

The 59 year old Swedish veteran GM due to his strong start still made a score slightly above expected, while 27 year old Mikalsen despite this star win ended slightly below expected following his slow start.

**FM Mathias Unneland (2228)** versus **IM Marsel Efroimski (2417)** was a Queen's Gambit in which black probably spoiled white's preparations with a provocative 3... a6?! White first came slightly better in an isolated pawn position, although black after exchanging the bishops had no short term problems to protect the key pawn at d5.

24.e4?! probably was dubious from a white point of view, as black could play d4 with an advantage. Black later instructively gave up her rook at c4 for a knight, leaving white in a cramped position with a paralyzed rook on a1 and knight on c1. Black active pair of knights following this gave her a winning attack well before 40 moves.

26 year old Efroimsky after all won a few more Elo-points following this inspired game win, qualifying as a success following her big Elo improvement from last year. Unpredictable Unneland needed a win to make an IM-norm out of this, but 5,0/9 with a performance of 2369 still won him more than 30 new Elo-points. This of course still qualifies as very promising when you are age 16, and Unneland remains the odds one favourite to become the first IM from the Møre and Romsdal district.



**Unneland vs Efroimski**

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**Kvaløy vs Miezis**

**Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2275)** versus **GM Normunds Miezis (2467)** was another Sicilian Maroczy duel, in which black demonstrated the better understanding.

Although white got a pair of bishops, after 15 moves black still was clearly better due to his c-file control and strong bishop outpost on d4.

White could (and did) exchange the dark squared bishops, but then black intervened on c2 with a decisive initiative in the rooks and minor piece endgame. Miezis repared much by winning his last two games, but still

finished outside the list of prize winners with a disappointing performance of 2330.

13 year old Kvaløy following his strong result in Stavanger had a slow start with 1,0/3 at Fagernes, and although improving somewhat later on he finished with a performance just above 2200.



**Nicolic vs Seo**

The Swedish battle between **Vladan Nikolic (2216)** and **IM Jung Min Seo (2456)** started up like a closed Catalan, in which white first had a sound space advantage. While white found no way to use his extra space on the kingside, black succeeded to open the queenside and gradually came better. Black's advantage increased as white after 21 moves strangely sacrificed his pawn at a2. Although the game lasted 26 more moves, black with an extra pawn and the more active pieces had it under reasonable control.

19 year old Jung Min Seo following a jumpy tournament landed just around his expected score at 5,5/9, and will have to continue his search for the third GM norm despite a promising first half at Fagernes. 30 year old Vladan Nikolic ended notably above his expected score with 4,5/9, after playing one GM and four IMs.

20 year old **IM Julian Martin (2396)** versus 21 year old **FM Trygve Dahl (2249)** was another Sicilian Maroczy duel, in which white first had a slight space advantage. As black played his knight up to e5, white gave up his bishop for it to play for a win with a three against two majority on the queenside. Black first had some counterplay due to his pair of bishops, but white increased the pressure by taking over the d-file as well. Black resigned after 32 moves as he had lost the e5-pawn. Dahl despite collapsing in both his final games won a few Elo-points, while Martin lost a few more Elo-points despite winning both his final games.



**Øye-Strømberg vs Lindh**

**Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2111)** versus **FM Fredrik Lindh (2296)** was a long Sicilian Sveshnikov duel, reaching a dynamically balanced position in the middle game. Following sound exchanges from both players, white came slightly better in the endgame with rook, knight and four pawns against rook, bishop and four pawns. Black defended by sound means and the game a few exchanges later on was drawn by a repetition after the time control. Lind following this landed just above his expected score, while Øye-Strømberg a few weeks

before his 16th Birthday won 28 more points and continues his remarkable progress from the last year.

**FM Øystein Bøyum Fossum (2302)** and **Andreas Skotheim (2146)** discussed some Reti/English relative, developing into a standard position with hanging black pawns at c5 and d5. White eventually won both the hanging pawns for his b-pawn, but due to black's active pieces he still had a hard time winning the rook and minor pieces endgame. The rook endgame with a-, e-, f-, g- and h-pawn for white versus a-, f-, g- and h-pawn for black was a borderline case. Black survived after white somewhat mysteriously sacrificed his last queenside pawn without having any clear road forward on the kingside afterwards. Fossum following this draw finished slightly below his expected score, while Skotheim could be very well satisfied to win 28 Elo-points following a 2268-performance.



**Murphy vs Nilsen**

The Benoni opening of **Tobias Lang Nilsen (2271)** got another critical test as black against **FM Conor Murphy (2428)** today. White in due course established a kingside space advantage with e4 and f4, realized the e5-break and got a clear advantage due to his passed pawns on d5 and e5. Having installed an octopus knight on the d6 outpost, white happily sacrificed an exchange on f1. Black's decision to sacrifice back an exchange on e5 was understandable, but still somewhat desperate, as white's pair of bishops dominated the board in the remaining

rook and minor pieces endgame. Murphy later instructively kept his pieces active while pushing forward the passed a-pawn to win decisive material before 40 moves. Both players have won a lot of Elo recently and finished somewhat below their new expectations here.



**Vestby-Ellingsen vs Shehzad**

**Shazil Shehzad (2247)** versus **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2375)** was a closed Ruy Lopez line in which white established first a space advantage and then a promising pressure in the diagonal a2–g8. Snatching a pawn at d6 with the queen however was much too greedy, as black soon won back the pawn at e4 and took over the initiative. Although white later had a pair of bishops, black had the pressure and just before 40 moves white's key pawn at b4 went lost due to a c-file pin. As black won the a5-pawn as well, he had few problems winning the

remaining minor pieces endgame. In the end 4,0/9 with a performance of 2244 confirmed the recent improvement from 15 year old Shazil. 5.0/9 with a performance of 2329 was below expected for 18 year old Vestby-Ellingsen – arriving from a convincing first place in the Nordic Youth Championship.



**FM Tobias Kenneskog (2309)** versus **Andre Gjestemoen von-Hirsch (2192)**

was a 3.Bb5-Sicilian, in which white got a pleasant pressure due to his queenside space advantage combined with the e-file control. Black however came up with some counterplay on the kingside, and although white had a strong rook on the e6 outpost, black got a nice knight on e5 after 24 moves. Sacrificing an exchange for the e6 knight was a good practical decision for black, and gave a jackpot as white overlooked a tactical Ne4!

a few moves later on. Black following this reached a won endgame before 40 moves, and von-Hirsch this time played bravely on to cash in a full point. 17 year old von-Hirsch made a slow start with 0/2, but lost no more games and made a plus result out of the tournament following this last round surprise. 26 year old Kenneskog on the other hand made a promising start with 2.0/3 and still was in the IM norm run at 4,0/7, but after losing both his remaining games he still ended half a point below his expected score.



**Kenneskog vs von-Hirsch**

The NTG junior duel between **Mathias Lind Schouten (2166)** and **FM Noam Vitenberg (2305)** was a Sicilian Accelerated Dragon, leading to a fairly balanced Maroczy position.

18.h4? however was a strange decision turning the game in favour of black, as he could just played Qf2 followed by Qxh4+. Black later remained in the driving seat due to his extra pawn and safer king. Lind Schouten succeeded getting some counterplay in the e-file, but as he ran short of time his kingside defence collapsed well before 40 moves.

Vitenberg won a few more Elo-points following a jumpy tournament, while Lind Schouten despite several excellent games failed to defend his new and much higher expected score.



**Schouten vs Vitenberg**

**IM Christian Köpke (2346)** versus **Pijus Greicius (2080)** was a rather unusual opening with 1.e4 e5 2.Nc3, in which white after castling short succeeded getting a pleasant initiative with some kingside space. Black still was in the game until he tricked himself with 18.--- Be2?? – overlooking that white could insert 19.e5! (to close the diagonal a1–h8 for black’s queen on f6) and then just take the bishop. About to lose one of the two pawns he had got for the bishop, black resigned after 25 moves. Despite this nice final blow, our new German chessfriend Köpke finished with a performance of 2143 nearly two points below his expected score. 16 year old Greicius despite his last round puncture still could take a few new Elo-points back to Lithuania.

**Sondre Melaa (2117)** versus **FM Volker Seifert (2246)** was agreed a draw after five moves in a very balanced French exchange variation. Melaa at 4,0/9 could be well satisfied to win back 16 Elo-points lost from earlier tournaments this year, while Seifert lost 12 points after finishing with 0,5/3.

**Christian Grundekjøn (2102)** and **Jacob Templen Grave (2202)** started up with 1.c4, but later transposed into some kind of Sicilian Maroczy. White for some moves was a pawn up, and although black won back the pawn white kept an initiative in the endgame with rook, bishop and five pawns on each side. In the fourth hour black probably should be able to scrape a draw, but still had a difficult time to defend an exposed king on g8 with a rather lame bishop on g7.

Although black had a couple of minutes more left on the clock, he had the much more difficult position to play with both players running short of time for 40 moves.

As black under pressure on the board and clock made a decisive mistake with 36.--- Bh6?, white efficiently decided the game with 37. Ra8+ Kh7 38.e6! fxe6 39.Be5 – threatening mate on h8 and winning the bishop stuck on h6. 18 year old Grave finished a full point below expected following this loss, although it should be taken into account that he has improved a lot recently and for the first time had to be compared with an Elo above 2200. 34 year old Grundekjøn had a promising start and finish on this tournament, leading to a fine performance just above 2150.



Mierins vs Törngren

The teenage-duel between **Emils Mierins (2057)** and **FM Gustav Törngren (2197)** was an open Ruy Lopez in which something went seriously wrong for white, as black before 15 moves got an initiative after exchanging bishop and knight for rook and pawn at f2. Both players made some mistakes later on, but black kept up the pressure after a queen exchange and reached a won endgame with two rooks and six pawns against rook, bishop, knight and four pawns. Probably Törngren should have been able to decide this

game earlier on. Due to his active rook and passed kingside pawns he still had a pretty safe win with rook and six pawns against bishop, knight and three pawns in the final endgame. Törngren made a notable plus due to this win, while Mierins won a few points of Elo despite this loss.

18 year old **Sergey Eliseev (2041)** versus 60 year old **Morten Andersen (2182)** was an unconventional generation duel starting up with 1.e4 Nc6. Castling long was probably too ambitious from a black point of view. White eventually won one pawn at a7 and another at b6, and looked close to winning before 20 moves. Forcing a queen exchange two pawns down here however was a good practical decision from black, as he later had a safe king and disturbingly active pieces in the rooks and minor piece endgame. Still two pawns down he suddenly had a draw within reach after doubling his rooks on the seventh rank after 30 moves. White in the meantime created some counterplay against the black king. Marching the king from c6 to b2 reportedly was a dubious plan, but in the end it still worked out for black.

As white became too eager to exchange off the rooks, black after the time control could win back white's queenside pawns and reach a minor piece endgame in which he had no problems sacrificing his bishop on the last white pawn. Eliseev won more than 50 Elo-points and immediately hit back following his disappointing result in Stavanger. Our one and only loyal Danish chessfriend Andersen following a slow start landed on a fairly solid result, half a point below his expected score.



Bin-Suhayl vs Mansoor in the back and Hagner in the front

**Afras Mansoor (1931)** versus **Ilyasa Bin-Suhayl (2168)** was another teenager duel and another Queen's Indian opening for Bin-Suhayl. This time he got active pawns and looked fine from the opening, although the position circled around his passed pawn at d4. The pawn probably marched on to d3 too early, as white within two moves picked up the pawn with his rook. His idea turned out to be sacrificing the queen for rook and bishop, but within a few moves it turned out that white's queen was superior in this position. This discovery was not too much of a surprise as black had scattered pawns and a somewhat exposed king. Mansoor before 40 moves demonstrated a winning plan in the endgame, and following a tough autumn he won back nearly 50 Elo-points this week. Bin-Suhayl although highly talented was too uneven this tournament, and in the end lost some 26 more Elo-points.

**Bredde Andre Hagen (1973)** meanwhile had even another critical test of his Caro-Kann opening as black against 13 year old **Bennet Hagner (2133)**. The outcome of the opening this time was an isolated pawn position which first was better for white, and then turned messy as black gave up his pawn at d5 to win back black's advanced pawn at b5. Computer programs still considered white's position close to winning when a draw was agreed by a repetition after 25 moves, although the position true enough was messy and double-edged to a human eye. Hagen made his best result for years and won more than 40 Elo-points this tournament, while highly talented Hagner following a demanding start finished nearly a full point behind his expected score. For sure he will soon hit back.

**Max Dahl (2041)** versus **Sigurd Grøver (2105)** was a French Tarrasch duel in which black due to his pair of bishops probably was slightly better following an early exchange of the queens. After white succeeded in activating his knight to d5, and black decided to exchange his light squared bishops for it, the remaining endgame with rook, bishop and five pawns on each side looked very drawish. In an apparently quiet bishop endgame, 33.--- g5? however turned out to be an instructive mistake – as white later could march his king up to the f5 square with a decisive pressure against black’s backward pawn at f6. Dahl later creatively demonstrated a winning attack against the pawn by maneuvering his bishop around to h8. 30 year old Grøver had a very promising position midway in this tournament, and won a few points of Elo despite «castling long» with 0-0-0 in the three final rounds. 15 year old Dahl on the other hand castled long in the first three rounds of this tournament, but still managed to continue his progress with 4,0/9 and a performance of 2075.



**Bjerke vs Lund**

**Terje Lund (2024)** and **FM Richard Bjerke (2102)** remarkably played the only game in this GM group today involving two players above age 35. It all started like a positional Kings Indian fianchetto duel, in which white kept a positional edge after exchanging at e5. White due to his pair of bishops and d-file rooks was reported close to winning around move 23–28. Sacrificing an exchange at d6 actually was a brilliant plan, but white for strange reasons decided not to establish a totally dominating passed pawn at d6 when black took the

exchange. White still kept a d-file initiative after winning back the exchange a few moves later on. Bjerke finally came over the hill when he was able to park his remaining knight on the d4 outpost just before 40 moves. He celebrated by accepting a draw by repetition of moves in a clearly better position after the time control. 3.0/9 despite many strong moves gave a notable loss of Elo for both players, wasting too many promising positions. Merited Bjerke aged 63 was the only player in this field born before 1960.

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (1936)** versus **Håkon Bentsen (2088)** was a closed Ruy Lopez opening which was agreed a draw after 14 moves upon black’s suggestion, with all 32 pieces still on board. White probably was slightly better, but he was 20 minutes behind on the clock and appeared less familiar with these positions. A performance just below 2000 on eight games was promising for 18 year old Hausken, invited to join this GM group as a substitute from round two. 41 year old Bentsen lost some 30 Elo-points and needs to turn his tide.



**Bentsen vs Hausken**

**Simen Sørensen (1975)** wasted many chances during this tournament, but repaired much of his loss by a somewhat lucky win as white against **Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2084)** in the last round. The opening was a Bogó Indian in which white first was slightly better, but the tide turned as black got all the time needed to establish a queenside space advantage around move 12–20. A tense struggle followed as white succeeded to open the h-file with some counterplay on the kingside. After picking up white's key pawn at b4, black still appeared close to winning after 36 moves. As both players were running short of time white however made the much better calculations, and at move 41 he had got the necessary time to find a very nice and decisive knight sacrifice at d5. Sørensen following this saved his remaining Elo, while Roulet-Dubonnet had too many pole out games and lost some 91 Elo-points.

**Christian Tunge (2044)** gave his English fianchetto opening another try as white against **Valentina Verbin (2023)**. Black reached an approximately balanced position with a Semi-Slav set up with d5–c6–e6–dxc4. White for a few moves had a promising pressure in the middle game, as black strangely placed her king on f7. 24.e5? however turned out to weaken white's king on g1 much more than black's king on f7. As white failed to find the best moves afterwards and ran short of time, black efficiently started a powerful attack based upon the c-file and the diagonal a8–h1. 19 year old Verbin reached an expected score following this counterattack win, while 50 year old Tunge although having positions for a plus score ended up nearly two points below.

**Sverre Lye (1858)** versus **Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1995)** was a well known Italian line in which something went seriously wrong for black, as white could play e5 and f4 with a big space advantage. 19.c5? actually was a mistake which could have given black a lot of counterplay with 19.... e4! As black instead blundered a bishop with 19.... exd4?, white soon was a piece up with a totally winning position. 14 year old Lye as the lowest rated player of the field could be very well satisfied with 3,5/9 and a performance of 2019, winning him some 45 Elo-points. Hodneland Rasmussen made two surprise draws in the first rounds and still was well above expected score at 2,0/5, but losing all his remaining four games he finished a full point below expected.



Lye vs Rasmussen

16 year old **Andreas Tenold (1995)** also had a promising start in this tournament, but also lost just above 20 Elo-points as he wasted much too many chances and lost five games in a row before winning on a bye in the last round. Curiously Tenold in the frustrated end on Saturday evening tried to request a walk over loss for round nine, but then the pairings already had given him a walk over win!

Our new young German chessfriend **Laurin Perkampus (2076)** had to travel home before round nine, but at 3,0/8 he left with a sound performance of 2126 and won some 15 Elo-points.

16 year old **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (1945)** due to illness was unable to play last round, but despite losing round 7 and 8 declared himself well satisfied with 2,5/8 and a performance of 2067, adding more than 30 points to his Elo account. Kim Roger won his first game against a FM this tournament and this was a memorable achievement for him.

Finally no way to forget, 16 year old **FM Elham Abdrlauf (2334)** at 3,5/7 still had a performance of 2347 and a score just above expected when he had to withdraw.

## Open Group

The first board in the Open became an intense four-hour battle, but was a rather one way driven game. 15 year old **Eivind Grunt Kreken (1838)** as white against **Torbjørn Dahl (1876)** went offensive with 5.g4! and 6.g5 in a Pirc opening. White had no immediate success with his kingside attack, as black kept his king on e8. After castling long white instead got the necessary help to open the center, and 15.--- b4 was a tactical blunder after which white soon was a knight up with an ongoing attack. 1-0 due to mate with two knights up after 28 moves qualified as a crushing win.



Kreken vs Dahl

An outstanding 7,5/9 was enough to assure Eivind an unshared first prize as his main competitor **Dion Krivenko (2045)** was a pawn down with a clearly inferior position as white against **Max Moe Pedersen (1837)**. 15 year old Krivenko following some lame moves from his opponent still succeeded to activate his pieces and get enough counterplay for a draw, after which he won a well deserved and unshared second prize. While Krivenko actually lost a few Elo-points, Kreken with a performance of 2076 won a remarkable 106 points.

Third board teenager meeting between **Ask Amundsen (1816)** and **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1650)** was an exciting Sicilian attacking race in which white proved able to hide his king at b1 behind a black pawn at b2, meanwhile picking up material to end up with a rook more in the fourth hour.



Amundsen vs Myagmarsuren

On the fourth board **Sigurd Kittilsen (1881)** as white in a Sicilian Maroczy position against **Askild Skovgaard Brønmo (1637)** failed to make use of his initiative in the middle game. Kittilsen instead succeeded to transform a balanced queen and rooks position into a won queen endgame in the last game of this group.

Fifth board saw another creative game win from 12 year old **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (1829)**, this time as black against **Amund Pihl Strand (1712)**. Fiskaaen early in the middle game got a strong initiative after sacrificing his queen for a rook and bishop, and before 30 moves completed the attack against the white king now stuck on h3. Fiskaaen won 49 Elo-points on this result and seems very likely to qualify for the 2022 GM group by reaching 2000 before April.



Strand vs Fiskaaen

Third and fourth prizes following this were shared between **Dahl, Kittilsen, Fiskaaen, Amundsen** and **Pedersen** at 6,5/9. 45 year old **Dahl** was by far the oldest player in the top of this group, but won the third place in next year's GM group very well deserved. Dahl played on the top board almost all the rounds and on the final list had the best Buchholz as well as the highest average of opponents. He immediately registered for the 2022 tournament, but will again play in the Open instead of trying to dance with the wolves in the GM group.

Eleven year old **Evsuld Myagmarsuren** following his last round loss got «only» eight place in the tournament, but still won 117 Elo-points with a performance well above 1900. The sensation man of the group still was ten year old, unrated and earlier unknown **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen** from Jæren. Simonsen reached 5,5/9 and a performance of 1706 after winning by a crushing attack as white against experienced **Erik Grindbakken (1632)** in the last round. Young David of course was very satisfied with this result, but remarked that he has a lot to learn about how to win from winning positions. This for sure is a talent we will hear much more about in the upcoming years.

The last round in the Open overall had many hard-fought games, few draws but also few very surprising wins. Ten year old **Alina Shehzad (1184)**, one of the youngest and lowest rated players of the field, completed her best tournament so far at 4,0/9 after winning against our always gentle Swedish chessfriend **Gusztav Lang (1629)**. Obviously enjoying the generous time limits, as she used almost every minute in almost all of her games, 14 year old **Elma Selvik (1352)** also came up with one more nice win as black against **Amanda Mai Eiding (1639)**. Following this Alina earned 130 Elo-points on this tournament, while Elma won 82. Judging from what we saw in this tournament, both still are strongly underrated.

Despite losing both the final rounds, the best female player of this group still was 17 year old **Live Jørgensen Skigelstrand (1649)**, improving 64 Elo-points and landing on the 21. place with 5,0/9.

18 year old **Ulrikke Langvik** reached the same sum of points and won 50 Elo-points, hence the way too few female players over all made a score far above expected. Still the player making the biggest Elo gain was a male junior: 18 year old **Ingvar Torjesen Kveim (1385)** from Kragerø finished the tournament with another plus game result as he made a draw against **Jon Arne Stokhaug (1861)**, and Kveim at 5,5/9 following this won a remarkable 161 Elo-points.



**Kreken and Krivenko with organizer Lahlum**

That was, not in short, our final round report from the 2021 tournament. The organizer was very happy to be back on the track following a long period with few serious over-the-board tournaments, and so apparently was almost all the players.

Thanks a lot also to our hard-working arbiters at Fagernes and the patient webmaster Eirik T. Gullaksen in Bergen. In 2022 our beloved Fagernes tournament will be back, almost certainly in an even bigger and stronger edition, in the Easter holiday from April 10 to April 17. We hope to meet again as many players as possible from this year plus many new chessfriends from various countries then!

**Photos by Tom Eriksen**