

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2022

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

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GM Group

Remarkably the third round of this GM group also passed without any short draws, although four out of the first six boards in the end had no winner. Remaining players with a 100 % score are Armenian GM Aram Hakobyan and Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots, both winning long and exciting games against GM colleagues today.



Erigaisi vs Can

First board meeting between **GM Erjun Erigaisi (2675)** of India and **GM Emre Can (2578)** of Turkey was a Sicilian Najdorf duel, leading to a double-edged position in which white came half an hour ahead on the clock. Much due to his fine knight on c4, he probably also was slightly better on the board. A tense struggle, as white won a pawn on the queenside while black had some counterplay on the

kingside. White according to the computers was better until he went for a tactical and mysterious 28.Bxa6?. True enough white was threatening the black bishop at e3 with his queen at e1. Can however soon demonstrated that he could protect the bishop with 28... Qg5! – and then win either the white bishop at a6 or the rook at b7. Black following this won a piece for two pawns, and afterwards he was able to exchange off the queens too. Playing with two rooks, bishop, knight and four pawns against two rooks, bishop and six pawns, black was clearly better when he short of time accepted a draw by repetition after 37 moves.



Donchenko vs Urkedal

GM Frode Urkedal (2539) versus **GM Alexander Donchenko (2619)** was a modern Queen's Gambit line with Bb4, in which white for a few moves appeared better due to his pair of bishops. Black however forced tactical exchanges, eliminating also the remaining center pawns. This resulted in a very balanced position with queen, rook, bishop and five pawns on each side. Giving up a pawn should have been unnecessary from a black point of view, but Donchenko anyway had no problems defending the remaining rook endgame with three against two kingside pawns.

Armenian **GM Amar Hakobyan (2612)** and Swedish **GM Erik Blomquist (2550)** discussed a rare open Sicilian line with 4.--- a6 5.a3 b5 6.a4. Both spent a lot of time to reach an about balanced (if still unconventional) position after 15 moves. A tense struggle followed as white later made a big decision to give up his fianchetto bishop for a knight at f6, after which both white's queenside pawns and black's kingside was more than a bit loose. As black had a promising pressure against white's backward pawns at b3 and d3, he after 27 moves left a repetition to play for a win. Black eventually won both the white pawns within a few moves, although white in the meantime pushed forward his pawns to e5 and f5. As Blomquist was running short of time he blundered it all with 32.--- Rh6??., leaving the black king in deep trouble as he after 33.exf6+ could neither take back the pawn or hide the king at h7. Losing a rook without saving the king, black stopped the clock after 37 moves.



Hillarp vs Sethuraman

GM Tiger Hillarp Persson (2511) and **GM Sethuraman Sethuraman (2610)** started up with a Meran Semi-Slav, transposing into a Dutch Stonewall as black played f5. White's decision to exchange at d5 and then play h4-g3 on the kingside was creative, but did not work out too well as black with active knights at e4 and g4 came better. The position however remained rather closed, and white succeeded first to bolster the kingside and then to kick back both the black knights by playing f3. Later the position

became rather static as none of the players found any attacking plans on the kingside, but still felt obliged to keep their forces mobilized. Around the time control the queenside finally was about to open, but then a draw was agreed upon black's suggestion after 42 moves.

GM Vahap Sanal (2593) as white in a Sicilian against **GM Kaido Kulaots (2529)** played 2.Nc3, but later transposed into some kind of Najdorf-like open variation. Black with a knight on c4 was fine despite his backward pawn at d6. The position remained in some kind of dynamic balance until both players had one queen, two rooks, one knight and six pawns. With one queen, one rook, one knight and five pawns left in each camp, the position after 40 moves still appeared drawish, although white with a knight on g6 had a slight initiative.

The tide turned as white first allowed a tactical 43...Ne4!? and then made the wrong queen move afterwards. Although white won a pawn at b5 he suddenly had the more difficult position to handle, as black's knight on g3 threatened white's key pawn at h5 and also gave some new attacking possibilities. White following this anyway was in trouble when he went for a defect tactical 46.Nxe5??. Instead of taking the knight, Kulaots intervened with 46...Qd1+, and within a few moves demonstrated a winning counterattack against the white king. As black finally could take the knight with check after hunting white's king around to f4, Sanal immediately resigned.

CM Ludvig Carlsson (2411) and **GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2650)** started up a Queen's Gambit with the bishop on b4, transposing into some kind of Semi-Slav Moskow line. Black had to give up his pair of bishops when exchanging the dark-squared bishop at c3, but had a solid position after realizing the e5-break. Sasikiran spent some 90 minutes for the first 19 moves, but this time lagged 50 minutes behind on the clock as Carlsson was much faster. Concluding all winning attempts too risky, Sasikiran pulled the brake and exchanged down to a dead drawn rook endgame well before 40 moves.



Sarin vs Schwarz

GM Nihal Sarin (2648) as white against **Dusan Schwarz (2295)** played 4.Qxd4 in an open Sicilian. White got a Maroczy set up on very favourable terms, as he could kick back black's knight from c5 with 17.b4. Later white played simple and strong chess: Hitting in at d6 to enter complications leading to a

materially balanced rook and minor pieces endgame – in which white's rook on the seventh rank soon won black's queenside pawns.

GM Aryan Chopra (2592) versus **GM Stellan Brynell (2406)** was another fascinating general duel, with an age difference of nearly 40 years. The young lion got the upper hand from this Sicilian Rossolimo opening duel, as black's pair of bishops was rather lame while white had active knights. White later kept an iron grip around the position, and black's position soon collapsed after his backward pawn at c6 went lost.



Brynell vs Chopra



Abdumalik (front) and Unneland vs Abdrlauf (back)

Edvin Trost (2342) and **GM Zhunsaya Abdumalik (2496)** in the meantime discussed a Grünfeld fianchetto line. White apparently had the much better preparation as he came more than 50 minutes ahead on the clock with a notable initiative on the board. White was reportedly close to winning as he was allowed to play Nd4 followed by Nxc6, although black found some counterplay by sacrificing a knight on e5. As the following tactical complications culminated, white in a messy position would have had a big advantage if just taking an

exchange with 27.Nxd8!. Instead withdrawing the knight with 27.Nh6+? he got bishop and knight for rook and pawn, but black now was not worse due to her more active pieces. Having only a few minutes left on the clock in a still double-edged position, Abdumalik after 39 moves sacrificed back an exchange to force a draw by repetition of checks.

The Norwegian junior duel between **FM Mathias Unneland (2254)** and **FM Elham Abdrlauf (2427)** started up with an Accepted Queen's Gambit, in which white came some 20 minutes ahead on the clock. Black however had no problems on the board, and even kept a c-file initiative after the c- and d-pawns were exchanged.

Black later ran seriously short of time, but still balanced the position into a drawish queen endgame. After making his move 30, black notably had only 33 seconds left on the clock. Even more notably, he then took a walk to watch other games in the neighbourhood. Black later speeded up and was out of the danger zone when a draw was agreed after 39 moves.



Mitusov vs Kaasen

Ukrainian **FM Semen Mitusov (2274)** and Norwegian **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2465)** had a Four Knights opening discussion, leading to a fairly balanced position with a fairly balanced time spending. Black had no problems after 20 moves, although the position leaned towards a draw following many exchanges. The rook and knight endgame for a few moves appeared promising for black, but white defended accurately and following tactical exchanged landed it in a dead drawn rook endgame.

FM Trygve Dahl (2252) versus **WGM Teodora Injac (2406)** was another positional Four Knights opening, in which black got a promising counterplay with a5 after white weakened his queenside with 16.b4?!. Both players spent a bit too much time from the opening, and the game had a slow progress for the next three hours. Black held some initiative towards the end of the middle game. White however defended well, reaching a drawish and fairly closed endgame with rook, knight and six pawns on each side. Injac with the higher rating and the better pawn structure still played on, and in the fifth hour got the help needed to open up the queenside and win a pawn. Exchanging off the rooks probably was a mistake from a white point of view, as the passed b-pawn gave black a decisive advantage in the remaining knight endgame. Injac took her time, but still won this rather safely and instructively – sacrificing the b-pawn to attack the remaining white kingside pawns.



Hobber vs Sieber

Norwegian **FM Anders Hobber (2379)** as white against German **WIM Fiona Sieber (2248)** went for a rather patient Torre opening with 1.d4 2.Nf3 3.c3 and 4.Bg5. Sieber in an aggressive mood won the pair of bishops after hunting the white bishop down with h6 and g5, but center control combined with the weakened black kingside later gave white a pleasant advantage. White castled long while black left her king waiting at e8 for a long while. As black in the end also castled long, white was ready to win a pawn at f7 with his rook. In a crumbling

position and short of time, 23.--- Nc5? was a fatal mistake from black. White could (and did) trap the black queen after 24.Nf5! Bxd2+ 25.Kc2! Qg5 26.Rg7. Winning material with an ongoing attack against an opponent seriously short of time, Hobber had no problems cashing in his first full point well before 40 moves.



Vestby-Ellingsen vs Ravi

WIM Rakshitta Ravi (2240)

apparently was surprised when **IM Mats Vestby-Ellingsen (2370)** today went for a Scandinavian opening with 1.e4 d5!?. Black came ahead on the clock and after exchanging two sets of minor pieces he also got promising pressure against white's d4-pawn. 16.h4? was a mistake as the pawn soon become a second attacking target for black. Black within a few moves won the pawn at h4. Although the game lasted until 50 moves, the patient endgame expert

Vestby-Ellingsen probably had it under control the whole time.



Roy vs Shezad

IM Prantik Roy (2368) versus Shazil Shehzad (2195)

was a Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line, in which white got some space advantage after three sets of minor pieces were exchanged. When black challenged white's queenside pawn chain with a5, white just took the pawn. Later white kept an extra pawn into the rooks and minor piece endgame, but black then got enough counterplay and eventually picked up both the white a-pawns. Black following this was a pawn up, but without winning chances, when the game just after the time control was drawn by a repetition.

FM Ward Altarbosh (2200) against IM Timofey Galinsky (2358) was a duel between two Oslo teammates. It all started like a French Exchange line, in which black somewhat originally went for a pawnstorm on the queenside after both players castled short. White's counterplay on the queenside was more successful, leading to a borderline rook endgame with an extra pawn for white. Both players here had about 1,5 hour left on the clock after they got 40 minutes in reward for passing move 40. The final endgame with rook, a-, g- and h-pawn for white against rook, g- and h-pawn for black first was a technical draw, as black had his rook placed in a very good position behind the white a-pawn. Following creative play from Altarbosh and inaccurate kingside defence from Galinsky, white after 65 moves still decided the game by escorting the passed pawn to a8 without losing his last kingside pawn.

The junior duel between **Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2157)** and **FM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2330)** started up like another Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line, but transposed into a Queen's Gambit-like position as black played d5. White played for a double-edged kingside attack with f4-f5 and was rewarded as black helpfully exchanged his dark-squared bishop. 16 year old Øye-Strømberg has done very well recently and had another nice game win here – first forcing black to give up an exchange, then exchanging down to an easily won endgame with rook and six pawns versus bishop and six pawns.

1.b3 was today's choice from **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2315)**, as white in a junior duel against our young German chessfriend **Bennet Hagner (2151)**. Black spent much time from the opening but handled the challenge fine on the board, exchanging off the c- and d-pawns as well as three sets of minor pieces before 20 moves. White kept a slight d-file initiative, and creatively sacrificed his e4-pawn to intervene with his rook on the seventh rank in the rook and bishop endgame. Black first defended active and accurately, but then gave white some hope as he gave up a pawn to get rid off the bishops. The rook endgame with four against three pawns still probably was a fairly easy draw, as black had his rook in the active position behind white's passed b-pawn. With plenty of time left on the clock, black however made a grave miscalculation when snatching back the pawn with 43... h4. White immediately locked in the rook with an elegant 44.g4!, and within a few more moves forced his way to a won pawn endgame.



Elmi vs Schneider

Saad Elmi (2092) as white against **WGM Jana Schneider (2263)** got a clear advantage after castling long in an Italian opening, since black struggled with an exposed king on e8. Playing Kf8 to get out of the e-file pin, black however succeeded in hiding the king at h7. Then she suddenly had the better long term attacking perspectives. White's king for a few moves appeared to be in serious danger, but exchanging off the

queens helped a lot as white's active pieces compensated for one extra black pawn in the rook and minor pieces endgame.

Black lagged far behind on the clock, but came up with a dangerous plan as she returned the pawn at the queenside to attack the white kingside pawns with her rook in the rook and knight endgame. Black following this had the win within reach for a few moves. Having very few minutes left on the clock, Schneider early in the sixth hour however became too eager to advance her h-pawn. Very young and highly talented Elmi efficiently used his chance to force a draw by repetition.

Sondre Melaa (2120) versus **FM Daniel Le Goff (2290)** was a Semi-Slav Meran duel in which white played slowly, allowing black to take over the initiative as the position was opened. Although white had a pair of bishops, black after 19 moves had a nice knight on e4 and was not worse. Black at that stage however had only 20 minutes left on the clock. A draw was suddenly agreed two moves later on.

German **FM Frank Buchenau (2269)** played aggressively with 1.e4 e6 2.f4 as white against Norwegian junior **Max Dahl (2054)**. Although white got a space advantage thanks to his e5 pawn, black got sufficient counterplay after opening the f-file. Black after placing his remaining rook in the f-file even held an initiative around move 17-19. 20.--- Qa3? however was a strange move based upon a fatal plan. Black short of time continued with the consequent 21.--- Qxa2?? – and then resigned as white played 22.Bc2-h7+ with the brutal plan 22.--- Kxh7 23.Qd2xa2.

IM Gerard Welling (2261) as white against **WFM Anita Grønnestad (1941)** played an apparently harmless exchange line in a Slav opening, but then suddenly accelerated on the kingside with an aggressive g4. Failing to find the best defensive plans in the opening, black soon was in trouble. The IM went on to win a smashing attacking game within 25 moves.

Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2050) following his first round win understandably gave his Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line a second try as white against **FM Nikolaj Zadruzny (2258)**. Although white lagged some 20 minutes behind on the clock, he was slightly better in the hanging pawns position on the board after 20 moves. White's strategical advantage later increased as he was able to fix black's hanging pawns at c4 and d5, leaving much room for white on the dark squares. Black's knights for some moves were active enough to compensate this. After the position was opened the endgame with queen, bishop and four pawns against queen, knight and four pawns first looked drawish. White however had the safer king plus more time left on the clock in the demanding and often decisive fifth hour. After black blundered his a-pawn, white soon demonstrated what an attacking potential queen and bishop can have in such an open position.



Hausken vs Nikolic

Vladan Nikolic (2247) and **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1991)** investigated a Queen's Indian fianchetto line looking more and more like a closed Catalan. White got a pleasant plus due to his center advantage and more active light-squared bishop. Nikolic again spent much time from the opening, having only 15 minutes left after 16 moves. Black for a long time defended well and succeeded in exchanging all the minor pieces. White however still had a slight initiative and the better pawn

structure with queen, rook and six pawns left on each side. Black's plan of exchanging queens here was misunderstood, as the rook endgame would be more or less winning for white. Although white first turned down the offer, he after winning black's loose c-pawn soon accepted the queen exchange and landed in an easily won rook endgame.

Andreas Skotheim (2206) as white against **Håkon Bentsen (2078)** went for a positional Italian opening line. A lot of exchanges around move 11-20 resulted in a balanced and still rather awaiting position with two rooks, one knight and eight pawns in each camp. Black had a very slight advantage due to his half-open f-file, and after 25 moves had three quarters of an hour against one left on the clock. Bentsen however played too fast with 31.--- dxe4?, weakening black's structure as he later struggled with two isolated e-pawns. White following this got some advantage in the rooks and knight endgame. Bentsen then defended creatively as he gave up the knight to eliminate a lot of white pawns. Skotheim following this pulled the brake and forced a draw by repetition of checks immediately after the time control.

Valentina Verbin (2037) versus **Kumar Rahul (2204)** started up with a Modern opening. Soon it transposed into a Pirc under less favourable circumstances for black, as white's d-file and better development gave her a winning initiative following an early exchange of queens. Verbin won an exchange and reached a won endgame with two rooks, knight and six pawns against rook, bishop, knight and six pawns. Then more or less nothing happened for some 20 moves. And then a draw was agreed by repetition. White still was a sound exchange up, but still struggled to find any winning plan.



Andersen vs Strand

The Danish representative **Morten Andersen (2190)** as white against Norwegian junior **Vetle Bjørge Strand (2018)** went for a Catalan approach in a Semi-Slav opening. It worked out well as black spent 95 minutes on the first 16 moves, and white still had the more active pieces on the board.

Strand however made good use of the time, as he after exchanging three sets of minor pieces successfully established a passed pawn at d4 and got some counterplay in the open g-file. Following this black was closer to an advantage when a draw was agreed by a sound repetition just before 40 moves.



Poysti vs Perkampus

The German duel between **Laurin Perkampus (2061)** and **Nathanael Poysti (2190)** started up with an apparently positional Queen's Gambit, but accelerated as black invited white to snatch a pawn at h7 with check. Probably this was dubious from a black point of view, but it still worked out well as white decided retreat his bishop instead of saving his key pawn at e5. After winning back the pawn black suddenly had the better kingside attack. It immediately turned winning as white overlooked a

neon-flashing bishop sacrifice at h3, and Poysti later finished the attack in inspired style.



van den Bersselaar vs Sørensen

Jeroen van den Bersselaar (2173) as white against **Simen Sørensen (2070)** first got the diagonal pressure he hoped for in this Reti opening. The tide however turned as white at move 15 strangely decided to take back a knight at e5 instead of black's key bishop at b7. White following this had to close the diagonal with e4, after which black was able to save his kingside while marching forward on the queenside. White might have had chances to save a draw after a queen exchange, but black had an extra pawn and all

the fun options in the rook and bishops endgame. Sørensen in an inspired mood increased the advantage by advancing his passed c-pawn and decided the game after 42 moves.

The Norwegian teenager duel between **Sverre Lye (1994)** and **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2088)** became the first drawn game in this round, but it was in no way a boring one. The start was a double-edged Alekhine opening, and after 22 moves black had approximately compensation for a sacrificed pawn. Unwilling to give back the pawn, white instead creatively won the black queen and one more pawn for one rook and two bishops. Black appeared better with rook, bishop, knight and three pawns against queen and five pawns, but his too open king reportedly balanced the chances. A draw anyway was agreed after 31 moves.

Pål Røyset (2133) as black in a Queen's Gambit against **Afras Mansoor (2033)** went for a provocative and prophylactic 3... h6?, but without much of a success as white got a sound space advantage after placing the bishop at f4.

As white was about to start a direct attack against the weakened black kingside, black sacrificed a pawn at e4. Compensation first was less than nothing and white for some moves had a winning position thanks to his passed pawn at c6. As white unnecessarily allowed a Nc3-Ne2-maneuver, black suddenly had some counterplay after 24 moves. As white tried to open up around the black king with 25.g6+!?, fxg6 would have made the position very unclear. Instead 25... Kxg6? became the final mistake as white after 26.Ne5+ and 27.Nd7 soon was able to promote his passed b-pawn.



Røyset vs Mansoor

Monika Machlik (2122) versus **Thomas Sekkingstad (1979)** was a tense Slav duel, in which black spent much time and white even more time from the opening. Later on black's decision temporarily to sacrifice a pawn at b3 reportedly was sound. 25... Ba5?! however might have been an inaccurate way to attack the pawn as white then could try a tactical 26.Rc5! planning 27.Rxd5 with a promising attack. As white instead put the queen on the c5 square, black did fine –

until he became too eager to take back the pawn at b3, stumbling into an attack. The apparently very strong tactical 33.Nxf5? actually was a mistake, as the computers pointed out that 33... g6! would leave white's pieces hanging. Sekkingstad however also was short of time, and after the much more human 33... exf5? white won back the knight at d5 with a won rook endgame to follow. Getting her 40 minutes extra after the time control, Monika had no problems converting this.



Machlik vs Sekkingstad

Stig K. Martinsen (2155) as white against **Kim Roger Westrum (2046)** made a modest start with 1.g3, but then transposed into some kind of Bird opening or Dutch Leningrad in Advance with 3.f4. As black later found no real attack on the queenside, white gradually built up a center and kingside advantage. Martinsen however again had spent way too much time, and had only some five minutes left when the position was opened around move 24. The position with queen, two bishops, one knight and five pawns on each side still appeared rather solid for both players when a draw suddenly was agreed after 29 moves.

Finally **Ola Liabøtrø (2101)** and **Thyra Kvendseth (1941)** discussed a highly interesting Scotch position in which white castled long and black short. White established a space advantage due to his e5-pawn and first was better. While white halted, black successfully activated her bishops with counterplay against the white king. Black spent a lot of time and white even more time in this complex position, and so after 23 moves white had left 11 minutes and black 18. Both players later understandably made some mistakes. Still black was in the driving seat for the rest of the game, as she had an extra pawn, the more active pieces and some minutes more on the clock. As Ola had less than one minute left, Thyra neatly finished off this exciting attacking game with 36.--- Bd4! 37.Bxd4 Qc1 mate.

WGM Olga Dolzhikova (2131) requested a walk over draw in this round, and following this still unlucky **Yoann Le Montagner (2035)** got a full point walk over. Both are in good health and will be back from the next round.

Open Group

Many young faces were seen on the top boards of the Open today.

First board duel between 15 year old **Heine Johannessen (1907)** and 18 year old **Misha Galinsky (1748)** was drawn after four intensive hours – although black had been winning more or less for the last two of them.



The top boards of the Open group: Østensen vs Simonsen (front) and Galinsky vs Johannessen (back)

12 year old **Nicolai Østensen (1875)** continues his strong play from the Kragerø tournament: Following a jumpy opening he today won in a convincing attacking style as black against 11 year old **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen (1648)**.

Third board was a hard-fought duel between 17 year old **Ask Amundsen (1838)** and 30 year old **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1666)**, finally drawn as both players had only the king left.

14 year old sensation man **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1474)** continues to walk around on the water, as he today won a violent attacking game on fourth board against veteran **Karim Ali (1769)**.

The group at 2,5/3 notably also includes 51 year old and second rated **Terje Lund (2032)**, today needing only 21 moves to bring sensation man **Edvard Andersen (1555)** back to earth.

Another highly capable player in this group is 13 year old **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (1895)**, winning an entertaining attacking battle as white against 15 year old **Theo Johannessen (1751)**.

Today's last drama and biggest surprise came on the ninth board: Fourth rated **Hallvard Haug Flatebø (1917)**, handling the white pieces against **Sondre Stai (1685)**, first wasted a promising middle game position. Then Stai after more than six hours succeeded in winning the classical pawnless endgame with rook and bishop versus rook.

First rated **Irina Donchenko (2057)** requested a walk over draw in the first half of the double round, and down at 1,0/3 has a long road back to the top boards.

The very young lions **Nicolai Østensen** and **Lukas Dominik Gåsland** following this are the only players left with a 100 % score in the Open, but a mixed and exciting group of ten players are running half a step behind at 2,5/3. Much more fun to follow in this group too.



Fiskaaen vs T. Johannessen



Johansen vs Kittilsen



Schneider vs Vangen



Holten vs Hammer

Photos by Tom Eriksen