

FAGERNES CHESS INTERATIONAL 2023

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

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GM Group

The first half of the double round this year became another very hard-fought and entertaining one, as the first six boards all got a winner. On the top two boards, fourth rated GM Abhimanyu Puranik of India and fifth rated GM Vahap Sanal of Turkey again won convincingly. Now the only remaining players at a 100 % score, they will play each other on the first board in the next round.

Second rated GM Samvel Ter-Sahakyan of Armenia won a long game on the third board and heads a four man group of players at 3.5/4 – also including veteran GM Eduardas Rozentalis plus the rising IMs Aditya Mittal and Tor Fredrik Kaasen. This round saw many surprising results, and first rated GM Sethuraman Sethuraman as well as third rated GM Bartosz Socko are in the crowd at 2.5/4 as they failed to win today's first game.

The first board meeting between **GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2599)** and **WIM Savitha Shri Baskar (2411)** started up like a Queen's Gambit Exchange line in which white postponed castling so long that he had to place the king at f1. Black was perfectly fine if not better after exchanging her light-squared bishop and one of the knights. Sacrificing a piece later was creative, but still almost certainly dubious from a black point of view. Puranik proved able to consolidate his king with an extra knight, bought for the reasonable price of two pawns. Well before 40 moves the GM efficiently switched to attack and decided the game by pseudo-sacrificing a rook at f7.



Puranik vs Baskar

IM Koustav Chatterjee (2520) and **GM Vahap Sanal (2582)** meanwhile discussed a closed Catalan in which the dark-squared bishops were exchanged at d2. White apparently had a more pleasant position controlling the d-file after an e4 break. Black however soon demonstrated his counterplay in the b-file to be more important, and within a few more moves picked up the white pawns at b2 and a2. White won back one of the pawns at f7, but this left his pieces in a close to overstretched position. The GM later made the best calculations and soon had a sound extra knight in the rooks and minor piece endgame.

GM Samvel Ter-Sahakyan (2613) as white in a Sicilian against **Sanket Chakravarty (2327)** first went for a patient King's Indian set up with g3 and d3. As the position opened black got a center advantage around move 15, but white due to his active pair of bishops still was better. Following a tactical queen exchange white won the d5-pawn and due to his strong bishops he had a winning position before move 25. Chakravarty fought bravely on for some 35 more moves, but white always had his two extra pawns. The final endgame with rook, c- and h-pawn against rook of course was an easy win for the GM.



Urkedal vs Kaasen

GM Frode Urkedal (2527) versus **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2462)** was a highly interesting Norwegian duel, starting as another Queen's Gambit in which black placed his bishop at b4. White exchanged at d5, but had more or less no advantage after black succeeded in exchanging three sets of minor pieces. After white blew up the center with 22.e4!? dxe4 23.d5, black was not careful enough for the next moves. White following this suddenly got a powerful attack against the black king at g7. Black more or less in desperation sacrificed his remaining knight to double his queen and rook on the eighth rank. Although insufficient from a theoretical point of view it was definitely black's most creative and challenging try. Besides it gave a jackpot as Urkedal short of time blundered back the piece and stumbled into decisive threats against his king at g4.

Fifth board saw an indian junior duel between **FM Tanmay Chopra (2351)** and **IM Aditya Mittal (2505)**. The opening naturally was a Queen's Indian fianchetto, in which black went for immediate counterplay with 4... Ba6. Black achieved an active position with pair of bishops and hanging pawns at c5 and d5, and advanced the d-pawn forward to d2 with a winning position before move 30. White somehow succeeded in blocking the pawn and come up with some counterplay against the king around move 40. He suddenly got a chance to save himself as black blundered with 42... Ra5?, allowing 43.fxg5! with counterplay against black's king. Missing that final straw, white two moves later resigned as he was about to lose his queen and end up a rook short.



Chopra vs Mittal

The generation duel between 59 year old **GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2504)** and 16 year old **IM Emin Ohanyan (2434)** started up with an Italian opening, in which white got a slight initiative after he realized the d4 break and took back with the knight when black replied with exd4. Rozentalis in an attacking mood soon accelerated with 16.Ndf5 and 18.Nxg7! It was a pseudo-sacrifice that would have won a sound pawn for white if black had taken the knight. Ohanyan instead went for a defect counter-sacrifice with 18... Nxf2?, and resigned two moves later as he realized that white following the clever 19.Bxa7! won a piece.



Rozentalis vs Ohanyan

GM Erik Blomqvist (2523) as white against **WGM Vantika Agrawal (2407)** started up with a slow double fianchetto. The game became somewhat more interesting as white later took action in the center with d4. Black however developed by sound means and had no serious worries. The game balanced without too many exciting moments into a dead drawn rook endgame which was buried after 29 moves.



Blomqvist vs Agrawal

GM Stellan Brynell (2402) versus **GM Sethuraman Sethuraman (2639)** was an interesting duel between the oldest GM and the highest rated GM in this tournament. They started up with a Moscow line from the Semi-Slav opening. Black got the pair of bishops as white decided to exchange a piece at f6 and a pawn at d5 instead of sacrificing a pawn at c4. White balanced this with his classical minority attack on the queenside. He succeeded in establishing a backward pawn at c6 and place a knight at the c5 outpost. Following a queen exchange the position however reached a deadlock, and after circling around with the remaining pieces for a while the players after 47 moves agreed a draw.



Brynell vs Sethuraman

IM Kushagra Mohan (2400) and **GM Bartosz Socko (2601)** discussed a French Advance line in which white kept the traditional kingside space advantage following the e5 pawn, while black went for counterplay in the c-file and placed a knight on the c4 outpost. White's plan for a kingside attack with f4-f5 was natural but dubious, as black won a pawn without too many dangers to his king. White later defended well, and before the first time control reached a rook endgame with two against three pawns. This is well known as a theoretical draw, since white here could place his rook in the perfect position behind black's passed b-pawn.

The Scandinavian junior duel between **FM Edvin Trost (2398)** and **IM Elham Abdulrauf (2519)** was some kind of King's Indian fianchetto in which white played both e3 and g3. Black creatively sacrificed one pawn at c6 to get the pair of bishops and then one more pawn at e4 to win an exchange. The material was in balance as white later had one knight and two pawns for a rook. White however had the much better pawn structure and could well have played on instead of forcing a draw by repetition after 27 moves.

IM Mohammad Fahad Rahman (2396) and **IM Jung Min Seo (2500)** discussed a Nimzo-Indian with 4.f3, in which white became too ambitious too early. After blowing up the center, black got overwhelming compensation for white's extra pawn due to his pair of bishops and attacking prospects against the loose white king at c1. White escaped the worst dangers by forcing a queen exchange at f6, but had to return the pawn and give up an exchange. Black following this had a trivial win in the endgame.



Rahman vs Seo

WGM Teodora Injac (2391) versus **GM Raja Rithvik Rajavaram (2472)** saw a sound Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line, leading to an approximately balanced position. Both players still spent a lot of time as the position became double-edged. White after 20 moves had a pair of bishops and some attacking chances, but playing with hanging pawns at c4 and d4 she offered a draw after 21.Re3.



Injac vs Rajavaram

The Scandinavian duel between **IM Linus Johansson (2463)** and **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2387)** started up with a Queen's Gambit, in which white put his bishop at f4 and black his pawn at c5. The c- and d-pawns left early, and black with his pair of bishops could be fairly well satisfied after 20 moves. Black decided to exchange his fianchetto bishop at b7 for a knight at f3, slightly disrupting white's pawn structure. The position with queen, rook, knight and five pawns on each side after 38 moves appeared balanced. White however still had a disturbing knight at e5. 40... Nd4? was a time trouble mistake – giving white the chance to play 41.Qc7! with a hard threat against the key pawn at f7. Black could exchange the queens and win back a pawn at b2, but that did not help much as white's rook, knight and kingside majority soon demonstrated a winning attack against the black king.



Johansson vs Vestby-Ellingsen

FM Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2329) and **IM Shete Sammed (2454)** started up with a loaded Sicilian Scheveningen position, and soon developed into a pawn storm attacking race after white castled long and black short. White with 29.f6 was the first to hit his opponent's kingside pawns, but it soon turned out that black's 23... b4 was more powerful. As black defended with 26... h6? instead of 26... h5!, white could have got a dangerous attack with the exchange sacrifice 27.Rxh6!. The automatic 27.gxh6? Kh7 halted white's attack for the necessary moves, and black smashed through on the queenside within six more moves.



Øye-Strømberg vs Sammed

IM Jonas Hacker (2455) versus **FM Benny Aizenberg (2366)** saw another Sicilian with 3.Bb5+. White got a pair of bishops but found no real attacking prospects on the kingside, hence black's counterplay on the queenside proved more important.

While white was running short of time, black found a powerful plan with Nf6–Nd5–Ne3. Giving up the dark-squared bishop for the octopus knight still was too desperate from a white point of view, as black's passed e-pawn and dark square dominance soon gave him a decisive advantage in the endgame. Curiously, 40.--- e1N+, humorously

forking white's king at g2 and knight at d3, was the first knight promotion in this tournament. White of course anyway had to take the new piece, and the remaining endgame with bishop and two pawns against three pawns was a straightforward win for black.



Hacker vs Aizenberg

The Swedish duel and teammate duel between **IM Erik Hedman (2323)** and **IM Hampus Sörensen (2448)** also became a Sicilian attacking race as white castled long, while black following some hesitation castled short. White had weakened his queenside pawns by playing a4, and black following a powerful d5-break soon could open all the queenside files with a winning attack. The final position was crushing from an attacking race point of view, as white's king on b3 was completely open and black's king at g8 perfectly secure.



Hedman vs Sörensen

IM Prraneeth Vuppala (2437) versus **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2345)** was even another Sicilian duel. This one was a Kalashnikov, in which white established a space advantage due to his pawn at d5. Black however proved able to put his knight at the d4 outpost, and still was close to equal after exchanging all the knights plus the light-squared bishops after 18 moves. White's queenside attack however worked out faster than black's kingside counterattack in this King's Indian like position. Vuppala after picking up two pawns neatly tricked his passed d-pawn into promotion by sacrificing his bishop in the final queen and bishop endgame.

12 year old **CM Sauat Nurgaliev (2286)** was soon brought back to earth after yesterday's amazing win against a GM, as he today got a hard shave as black against **IM Zhen You Cyrus Low (2425)**. As black had hesitated to castle, 12.--- bxc6? in this Sicilian position turned out to be a more or less decisive mistake. White after 13.c5! > d5 14.exd5 exd5 15.Nxd5! soon could open the center with a crushing attack against the black king at e8. Black later found no safe place for his king and stopped the clock as he after after 26 moves was about to lose the queen and/or the king.

The young teenager star duel between Norwegian **FM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2266)** and Austrian **FM Lukas Dotzer (2416)** was another Sicilian in which black's uncastled king soon gave him headache. White castled long, sacrificed a pawn to open the position, and got a jackpot as black blundered with 18... Ne4? – allowing 19. Bxe4 dxe4 20. Nf5! with a winning attack against the king at e8. Black here could survive by forcing a queen exchange, but white soon had two minor pieces for a rook with a winning attack.



Kvaløy vs Dotzer

Believe it or not, but 17 year old **IM Semen Mitusov (2412)** and 13 year old **FM Magnus Ermitsch (2277)** had another Sicilian duel – in which white castled long and sacrificed a pawn to open files against the black king at e8. Black here for a while defended well and proved able to exchange two sets of minor pieces. White still had a lot of pressure and definitely got the upper hand as he won back the pawn with a tactical 23. Bxg7! Mitusov instructively forced his way to a won rook endgame, which became a won pawn endgame since black after 30 moves was not willing to give up a second pawn.



Mitusov vs Ermitsch

Estonian **GM Kaido Kulaots (2494)** finally won a game in the fourth round. When the win came, it was a creative win against the young Mongolian **CM Chinguun Bayaraa (2203)**. White got a strong initiative against black's somewhat slow Queen's Indian set up, and white's position turned winning as he at move 15 hit in with an instructive knight sacrifice at e6. Within a few moves white won back the piece and soon reached a won rook and bishop endgame with two extra pawns. Kulaots even finished off the game in an instructive style, sacrificing his bishop to let the king and passed pawns fulfill a mating attack against the black king.



Kulaots vs Bayaraa

The game between **CM Adithya Chullikkad (2259)** and **GM Monika Socko (2440)** was a rare test of a French Winawer with 5.--- Ba5?!/!?. Black obviously had the better knowledge of this and got a close to winning advantage with an extra pawn and a pair of bishops. Following inaccurate play from black, white however succeeded in coming up with some counterplay and won back the backward black pawn at e6. Black still was somewhat better with rook, bishop and five pawns against rook, knight and five pawns, as her bishop on an open board was superior to white's knight.



Chullikkad vs Socko

The endgame turned winning for black as she before the time control picked up both the white queenside pawns. White somewhat unnecessary later played the game to a mate at move 60, although the GM had two queens more at that stage.

IM John-Paul Wallace (2384) versus **CM Andreas Skotheim (2228)** was an English opening, in which black a bit loosely sacrificed a pawn at e4. Following an early queen exchange, black first got a lot of activity and then won back the pawn at c4. Two rooks in the d-file combined with a kingside pawn storm for some moves gave him a strong initiative. Black for a moment had a winning initiative with 28.--- Ne2+! and 29.--- R8d4! As he instead lost the thread and moved his rook from d8 to a less active position on the kingside,



Wallace vs Skotheim

white could exchange black's key bishop at g5 and level the chances again. White in turned wasted a promising attack a few moves later on. Consequently the players after 50 moves had reached a drawish endgame with two rooks, bishop and two pawns against two rooks, knight and two pawns. Exchanging one set of rooks however was a mistake from black, and gave white an edge. Even the final endgame with rook, bishop, g- and h-pawn against rook, knight and a-pawn after 70 moves reportedly was a draw. The IM however now had the more easy moves to find plus a few minutes more to find them. In the last game of this round, black towards the end of the sixth hour stumbled into an endgame with rook versus rook, bishop and h-pawn. This was an easy win for white since the bishop was a dark-squared one, controlling the promotion square at h8.

WGM Pallathur Nandhidhaa (2362) and **Max Dahl (2152)** meanwhile investigated a rare Caro-Kann line without d4. Black succeeded with his firm intention to exchange queens (after 6... Qd5 7.Qh4 Qf5 8.d3 Qg4 9.Qg3 Qxg3) and first had a sound position. Giving up the light-squared bishop for a knight at c4 was a strategic mistake, as white's pair of bishops in a half-open position gave her the better long term prospects. Black however later defended stubbornly, and after 54 moves had exchanged it down to an endgame with rook, two minor pieces and three pawns left on each side. Black had scattered pawns, but his passed f-pawn was potentially disturbing, hence white pulled the brake and offered a draw.



Nandhidhaa vs Dahl

CM Sverre Lye (2212) versus **IM David Cummings (2318)** was a Caro-Kann exchange line in which a lot of minor pieces also were exchanged early. Black never had any problems and eventually won a pawn, but white due to his active rooks still had the draw fairly well under control in the endgame.

GM Tiger Hillarp (2513) as white in a rather unconventional English fianchetto against **Vetle Bjørge Strand (2026)** accepted a queen exchange at b4 before ten moves. White first had only a small edge, but soon came up with substantial pressure against the black queenside. Strand spent enormous amounts of time without finding any active plan, and then his defence collapsed under increasing pressure on the clock and board. White established a passed pawn at b7 at move 28 and won decisive material within two more moves, after which black respectfully resigned.



Hillarp vs Strand

The junior duel between **FM Sambit Panda (2452)** and **FM Mathias Unneland (2188)** made an interesting start with an Accepted Queen's Gambit in which white won back the pawn at c4, but under somewhat unclear circumstances sacrificed his pawn at a4. Although white got some attacking chances black later was fine until he decided to return the pawn at b7. The remaining rook and minor piece endgame with an extra passed pawn at c5 was painful at best from a black point of view, and white confidently escorted in his passed pawn after exchanging off the rooks.

IM Moksh Amit Doshi (2397) and **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2139)** transposed into an Anti-Meran line of the Semi-Slav opening. White demonstrated the better understanding of these positionally tense positions, as his pair of bishops gave him a clear advantage after the center was blown up. Black succeeded in finding some counterplay and exchange queens. The rook and minor pieces endgame still was very difficult for black due to white's dominating bishops. Although the game lasted more than 70 moves, white probably had the full point under control in the minor piece endgame with an extra pawn.

FM Mahitosh Dey (2154) versus **FM Bennet Hagner (2354)** was a Nimzo-Indian in which white was eager to exchange off pieces. After all the bishops and one set of knights had left, black after 24 moves had a slight advantage as white's isolated pawn at c5 here was a weakness more than an asset. The position became double-edged as the pawn was allowed to reach c6, and white for a few moves around the time control was close to winning in the rook and knight endgame. Black after the time control, for the cost of a pawn, finally succeeded in eliminating the disturbing white c-pawn, and got some counterplay with his passed a-pawn. In the fourth hour white sacrificed a knight for the a-pawn, assuring himself a safe endgame with rook and three kingside pawns against rook and knight. Black in turn sacrificed his knight for two pawns to force a dead drawn rook endgame.

FM Saad Elmi (2321) versus **Monika Machlik (2136)** was another Caro-Kann in which white went for piece activity instead of center control with d4. White following an early queen exchange here kept a slight edge on the board and a clear advantage on the clock, into an endgame with two rooks, bishop and six pawns against two rooks, knight and six pawns. White immediately exchanged his bishop for the knight to disrupt black's kingside pawn structure. The remaining rook endgame with five pawns on each side for sure was a draw. Black however still had some challenges since white had the better pawn structure, a two versus one majority on the queenside, and a big advantage on the clock. Black's idea of sacrificing a kingside pawn to activate her king was creative but still dubious, as white's passed f-pawn marched to victory in the sixth hour.



Machlik vs Elmi
(Photo: Anniken Vestby)

The talented junior players **Johannes von Mettenheim (2317)** and **Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (2103)** this round discussed a rare Dutch fianchetto, looking all the more like a Stonewall after white exchanged his fianchetto bishop for a knight at d5. White later had a sound plus as his knight on the c5 outpost was clearly superior to white's rather passive light squared bishop. White took his time to find a breakthrough in a rather closed position with queen, rook, knight and seven pawns against queen, rook, bishop and seven pawns, but early in the fifth hour he suddenly smashed through with a direct kingside attack.



Sian vs Anand

The young teenager duel between **Shadi Sian (2137)** and **Arhan Chethan Anand (2285)** started with a symmetrical Slav Exchange position and later remained approximately in balance through three hours with more or less sound piece exchanges.

Black was closer to something in the bishop and knight endgame after three hours, but white's position remained solid and the final bishop endgame was immediately agreed a draw after 37 moves.

Valentina Verbin (2071) as white in a Caro-Kann against **FM Sourath Biswas (2265)** went for the Advance variation, and due to her pawns at e5 and d4 kept a space advantage. Black first did not get much out of the c-file control, but late in the middle game he after all got some counterplay against white's queenside pawns. Black for some two hours played on with a slight initiative in the endgame with rook, knight and two pawns against rook, bishop and two pawns. Verbin ran short of time on the clock, but still never appeared to be in real danger on the board. In the end just before 70 moves white instructively sacrificed her bishop to force of the rooks and get rid of the final two black pawns.



Verbin vs Biswas

FM Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2215) as white against **Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1976)** played 1.Nf3 and 2.c4, but the game later transposed first into a closed Catalan and then (as black played Ne4 followed by f5) into a Dutch Stonewall. Obviously familiar with this, white exchanged the dark-squared bishops at a3 and the light-squared bishop for the black knight at e4. This left a position in which white's knight at the e5 outpost was obviously superior to black's bishop at h5. Forcing a queen exchange at g5 also proved to be a good decision by white, as he could later open both the queenside and the h-file with a decisive rook intervention against the black king.



Roulet-Dubonnet vs Rasmussen

Shelev Oberoi (2226) and **Saketh Pedagandham (2074)** started up with a rare but rather sound 3.Bd3 in a French. As black handled this inaccurately, white had both a slight initiative and the better structure after exchanging off the queens at d8. White's advantage became decisive as black after 15.Nb5+ replied with 15...cxb5?, sacrificing the exchange as white could play 16.Bxa8. White played a solid game and had no problems winning the endgame with two rooks against rook and bishop.

Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2040) and **Shazil Shehzad (2212)** meanwhile tested out some rare Catalan relative, in which black instead of b6 played a6 and b5. Black was happy to exchange first light-squared bishops and then the queens. He was more happy later to exchange of his dark-squared bishop for a knight at e3, leaving white with two e-pawns and a rather passive bishop. As white spent much time without finding any active plan, black could open first the kingside and then the queenside with a confident win in the rook and minor piece endgame.

CM Juan Gomez Aguirre (2206) versus **Jiahao Eivind Ji (1959)** was a Queen's Gambit Accepted in which black was too careless when opening the position, as white's powerful bishops at b2 and d3 gave him a clear advantage after the c- and d-pawns disappeared. Exchanging the e-pawn for the white pawn at a3 only made the situation worse for black, as white now could destroy black's kingside pawn shelter with 17.Bxf6 and later had a decisive attack against the black king. Black soon had to give up two pawns to save the king, and Aguirre later had a safe win in the endgame.



Gomez Aguirre vs Ji

WIM Rucha Pujari (2195) and **Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (1930)** started up with a Semi-Slav opening. Black's later try for a Dutch Stonewall set up with 9...Nh5? and 10...f5?! backfired badly as white could play h3 and g4 with a violent attack against the black king. Pujari later showed up brilliant attacking chess – sacrificing one bishop at g7 and the other one at g8 to mate the black king at h8 after only 22 moves.



Pujari vs Evenshaug

Norwegian teenager **Peder Marcus Aamodt (2022)** went for a modest 3.Bb5+ as white in a Sicilian against German veteran **Johannes Hentrich (2166)**.

White soon invited a queen exchange at c4, and later had an edge due to black's backward pawn weakness at d6. Black however came up with some counterplay as he just sacrificed the d6-pawn. Black's strong bishop at d4 and active rooks later gave full compensation for white's extra b-pawn in the endgame.

White was under notable pressure when he blundered with 31.R1d2?? – overlooking that black after the rook exchange at d2 could insert two checks and then play Bc3 with a double attack on white's knight at b4 and rook at d2. Hentrich following this won a bishop for two pawns and had no problems winning the remaining endgame.



Aamodt vs Hentrich

The Norwegian junior duel between **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2144)** and **Martin Øksendal (2060)** was a Tarrasch Queen's Gambit line with a lot of early exchanges. At move 16 the players already had reached a double rook endgame in which white's better pawn structure gave him a slight plus. Black within ten more moves was able to exchange his a- and c-pawns against white's a- and b-pawns, after which a draw was agreed.

Pankit Mota (2101) versus **Sigurd Lye (1980)** was a Sicilian Alapin, but also saw a lot of exchanges in the opening. After 18 moves the players had reached an endgame with two rooks, knight and six pawns against two rooks, bishop and six pawns. Due to white's two isolated e-pawns black here had a structural advantage. As white's seventh rank rook approximately balanced this, the players immediately agreed a draw by repetition. White could have taken the pawn at b7 and continued the game, but was obviously unwilling to run the risk of losing.



Mota vs Lye

Linus Sandstad (1912) and **Håkon Bentsen (2088)** discussed a Catalan in which black had no problems after exchanging the dark-squared bishops, bringing his light-squared bishop out to c6 and placing a knight at e4. White's decision to exchange the knight at e4 appeared dubious as his bishop at g2 later was rather lame due to the black pawn at e4, while black got a nice new square for his knight at d5. Black efficiently doubled his rook in the c-file and picked up a pawn at b4, after which white a little bit early resigned a lost position after 27 moves.



Sandstad vs Bentsen

Sindre Ytrestøyl (1987) versus **Manmay Chopra (2113)** saw an English fianchetto in which white's Botvinnik set up gave him less than nothing. Black parked a knight at the d4 outpost and after 22 moves had a promising kingside attack coming up. 26.Be4? was a blunder which could have been punished by an exchange sacrifice, but as black missed that chance white after 26... Be5+? 27.f4 was back in the game. When the smoke cleared after some tactical exchanges, black was a pawn up in the queen and bishop endgame. The extra pawn did not help black much, as white could force off the queens and make a safe draw due to opposite-coloured bishops.



Ytrestøyl vs Chopra

Michael Ermitsch (2047) and **Alexander Rosol (2076)** started up with a Pirc, but transposed into a Philidor position in which black after exchanging two sets of minor pieces was perfectly fine. 19... d4? instead of the simple 19... dxe4 or 19... Bb4 however soon turned out to be overambitious, as white suddenly had a strong attack after the critical 20.e5! White missed the best continuation afterwards, but due to his active king and kingside pawn majority he still had a much better starting point in the rook and bishop endgame. At first sight the bishop endgame with five pawns on each side after 40 moves appeared drawish due to the opposite-coloured bishops. White's active king at f5 combined with the marching kingside pawns now in fact made black's position hopeless, as white would within a few moves get two connected and mobile passed pawns.



Ermitsch vs A. Rosol

Finally the junior duel between **Philip Rosol (2010)** and **CM Jack Mizzi (2049)** started up with a Queen's Gambit in which white's set up with Bf4 gave him no advantage (or disadvantage). After 21 moves the position with two rooks, two bishops and six pawns against two rooks, bishop, knight and six pawns was approximately in balance, although black's hanging pawns at c5 and d5 made it somewhat double-edged and far from harmless. White underestimated the dangers related to his weak first rank as he allowed a powerful double break with 22... d4! and 23... c4!, leading to a strong initiative for black. 24.Bxb6?? now blundered as piece. Mizzi efficiently used his chance with 24... cxb3! and later won the endgame without many nervous moments.

Morten Andersen (2156) and **Ask Amundsen (1937)** had a walk over draw this round, but will be back on the track from round 5.

Open Group

The Open in round four had a long and interesting top board meeting between **Sigurd Kittilsen (1822)** and **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1813)**. White after 25 moves sacrificed a piece instead of accepting a draw by repetition. The position was difficult to handle for both players, and the advantage jumped back and forth a few times. After 48 moves the players still had a tense position in which white had sacrificed a bishop for two pawns. 49.--- Bc7?

however was a blunder, as white after a tactical 50.Rxc7! soon won back the piece with a winning position. Kittilsen following

this came two pawns up in the queen endgame, but still had a hard time winning due to his open king. White had a win within reach just before 90 moves, as his passed pawn had reached f7 and was ready to promote. The timing for the promotion with 90.f8Q? however was bad and for sure affected by Kittilsen's time shortage, as Gåsland could now immediately force a perpetual check with one queen and one pawn against two queens and one pawn.



Kittilsen vs Gåsland

13 year old **Rafe Rehman (1824)** a few hours earlier on first pushed for a win as black against **Erlend Etner (1571)**, but despite an extra pawn Rehman in the final rook and bishop endgame had to be well satisfied with a draw.

Third board meeting between the happy veterans **Karim Ali (1773)** and **Dag Arild Andersen (1776)** also ended up as a long and hard-fought draw. Andersen as black was better most of the time, and still a pawn up with good winning chances in the final queen endgame position after 62 moves.



Etner vs Rehman

Our English chessfriend **Tim Spanton (1806)** won by a nice attack as white against **Sondre Stai (1722)**, while eleven year old **Jiabao Eivind Ji (1689)** despite a promising pressure in the middle game had no advantage and soon offered a draw in the rook endgame as white against **Ida Lahlum (1628)**.

20 year old **Sigurd Lauvås Gaure (1616)** seems to have recovered fully from his first round loss, and today won an inspired attacking game as black against our German chessfriend **Oliver Bach (1668)**.

The Open had more draws in this first half of the double round, and again relatively few surprising results. Top rated **Jon Arne Stokhaug (1843)** is still lurking in the crowd with a 50 % score, following a safe and sound draw as white against **Erlend Reigstad (1594)**.

A very interesting pawn endgame was seen in the game between **Morten Smedsrud (1403)** and **Frode Bjørnstad (1270)**. Bjørnstad efficiently used his chance to win this as Smedsrud short of time chose a way to slow king march plan.

30 year old Sigurd Kittilsen following all this lost his first half point, but remained in unshared first place at 3.5/4, half a point ahead of Rehman, Gåsland, Entner, Andersen, Spanton, Ali and Gaure.

Top boards coming up for this afternoon are Rehman–Kittilsen, Gåsland–Entner, Andersen–Spanton and Gaure–Ali.

1 photo by Anniken Vesty (credited) and the rest by Tom Eriksen