

FAGERNES CHESS INTERATIONAL 2023

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

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GM Group

The evening part of the double round not unexpectedly got a somewhat bigger percentage of undecided games. Four out of the top five boards now were drawn. Indian GM Abhimanyu Puranik still enjoys Fagernes a lot and was reported close to winning for some two hours as black against GM Vahap Sanal at the first board. The young Turk GM however fought on well and scraped a draw with a pawn less in the rook endgame.

The two next boards, with all players at 3.5/4, were Norwegian IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen versus GM Samvel Ter-Sahakyan and Indian IM Aditya Mittal against Lithuanian GM Eduardas Rozentalis. Since both these games were drawn relatively early, Puranik and Sanal now at 4.5/5 are still shared first.

The bigger group at 4.0/5 in addition to the four players mentioned above also includes IM Koustav Chatterjee and WGM Vantika Agrawal of India, IM Linus Johansson of Sweden and IM Semen Mitusov of Ukraine – all four winning their games against well-qualified opponents. The GM group tonight saw many more or less suprising game results but no real sensations, and candidates for title norms fortunately are still way too many to be listed here.

So far successful **GM Vahap Sanal (2582)** could hardly be satisfied with his Italian opening against GM **Abhimanyu Puranik (2599)**, as black after 17 moves had two bishops against two knights and an isolated white pawn at d4 to target.

White's position apparently improved as he could play d5 and exchange the isolated pawn at c6, but black within a few moves won the white pawn at b2 with a clear advantage. The rook and minor piece endgame with an extra pawn for black was a borderline case. Sanal however fought on well in the sixth hour, keeping his rook and



Sanal vs Puranik

knight active while using approximately every chance he got to exchange pawns. The last black pawn left the rook endgame after 65 moves and the rooks left in the next move – leaving two lone kings on the board and no players with a 100 % score in the tournament.

Second board duel between Norwegian **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2462)** and Armenian **GM Samvel Ter-Sahakyan (2613)** lasted some five hours shorter than the first board tonight. White went for a solid Queen's Pawn fianchetto without c4, after which black played c5 and offered a draw at move 8. Ter-Sahakyan was black and fairly well satisfied to reach 4.0/5 after a long win in the fourth round, while Kaasen was still shaken after his fourth round drama and happy to move one step closed to a GM norm.



Kaasen vs Ter-Sahakyan

The generation duel between 16 year old **IM Aditya Mittal (2505)** and 59 year old **GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2504)** was a somewhat Nimzo-like English opening, in which black exchanged his dark-squared bishop for a knight at c3 within the first five moves. Not much more happened until a draw was agreed in a balanced and blocked position after 33 moves.

The young Indian duel between **WIM Savtha Shri Baskar (2411)** versus **IM Koustav Chatterjee (2520)** lasted six hours and became the last game to finish on the top boards. This was not expected after two hours. As the position opened after a closed Ruy Lopez opening both players were eager to exchange pieces, and after 33 moves the double rook endgame with a-, f-, g- and h-pawns for both players appeared drawish. Chatterjee with the more active rooks still played on for a win, creatively exchanging his a-pawn for the white f-pawn. Doubling his rooks on the seventh rank, he kept a nagging edge. In the fifth hour white had been able to exchange one kingside pawn, but the remaining position became all the more troublesome as black was able to hunt the white king away and then advance his two against one majority on the kingside. With a few minutes left on the clock for both players, Chatterjee first picked up the rather lame white a-pawn and then marched his h-pawn into a 82-move triumph win.

IM Jung Min Seo (2500) as white in a Sicilian against **IM Zhen Yu Cyrus Low (2425)** turned down the invitation for a long Sveshnikov duel and instead went for a more positional Rossolimo with 3.Bb5. It did not work out too well as black due to his pair of bishops soon took over the initiative following an early queen exchange. Jung Min Seo however defended actively and before 40 moves escaped into a rook endgame in which black's extra pawn due to his scattered pawns gave him no winning chances.



Seo
(Photo: Anniken Vestby)

Indian **Sanket Chakravarty (2327)** versus Swedish **IM Linus Johansson (2463)** was an English fianchetto, transposing into some kind of King's Indian after white accelerated in the center with d4–e4–d5. White first had a space advantage, but playing for a kingside attack with f4 he became too careless. Black intervened in the a-file, picked up a pawn at b3 and following some tactical exchanges won another pawn. Although white's pair of bishops and passed pawn at c6 was a bit disturbing, black with two extra pawns was objectively winning after 34 moves. White short of time blundered a bishop with 35.Bb6?? and resigned as he after 35.--- Qxb6! realized that 36.Rxb6 was not possible due to 36.--- Ra1+ with check mate soon to follow.

The young IM duel between **IM Shete Sammed (2454)** and **IM Semen Mitusov (2412)** was a Catalan in which black's set up with d4 probably was overambitious, as white could advance his queenside pawn majority and got a promising pressure on the light squares. The game suddenly became tactical as black sacrificed a pawn at e4 to push forward his passed d-pawn. While black missed his best continuations, white in the fourth hour got the upper hand as he hit in with a tactical stroke at f6 – winning two pieces for a rook. White at move 41 somewhat strangely sacrificed back a knight for black's passed d-pawn. White still had one knight and two pawns for a rook, and obviously hoped that his passed pawn at b5 would decide. Moving the pawn ahead to b6 however backfired as black within a few moves won the pawn and took over the advantage. White due to his open king anyway was in trouble when he short of time blundered his knight and resigned after 55 moves.

The Scandinavian duel between **IM Hampus Sørensen (2448)** and **FM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2266)** was a classical Nimzo-Indian struggle in which white's extra space and pair of bishops first was more important than his inferior queenside pawn structure. The position remained very closed for the first four hours. With all 16 pawns still on board, white coolly placed his king at b3 to protect the queenside pawns. White and his bishops for some moves had a pressure as the kingside finally opened around move 40. Black however defended well and after 55 moves white offered a draw as he was unable to find any way forward.



Sørensen vs Kvaløy

WGM Vantika Agrawal (2407) today won a memorable attacking game as white against **IM Prraneeth Vuppala (2437)**. The start was a Noteboom Semi-Slav, in which black at move 4 snatched the pawn at c4. As white went for positional compensation with a fianchetto set up, black was able to keep the extra pawn. White however first got a lot of positional compensation and then switched to a direct kingside attack with a tactical 16.Nf6!? Black probably should have tried to accept the offer, as white soon got a powerful attack when he instead exchanged his dark-squared bishop for the knight. Black in desperation later tried to sacrifice an exchange for some counterplay, but it did not help much as white after 40 moves was a rook up with an ongoing attack.



Agrawal vs Vuppala

FM Benny Aizenberg (2366) versus **GM Frode Urkedal (2527)** was another long and hard-fought Ruy Lopez duel. The position after 23 moves appeared approximately equal, although black after exchanging three sets of minor pieces had no worries. Urkedal blew up the center with 24...d5!? and got a slight initiative as he soon took over the open e-file. The position with queen, two rooks and four pawns after 38 moves still appeared drawish. The invitation to a queen exchange with 39.Qc5? however was a blunder as black could reply 39...Rd2! with a mating threat at g2. Black following this could keep the queens and win two of the white pawns. Although the game lasted well into the sixth hour, the GM with two extra pawns had the remaining queen and rook position under fair control.



Aizenberg vs Urkedal

Polish **GM Bartosz Socko (2601)** as white against Swedish veteran **GM Stellan Brynell (2402)** entered the very same French Advance line which Puranik used to defeat Brynell in the second round. An obvious drawback was that Brynell could have repaired the variation in the meantime. The suspicion that he had done so was soon confirmed. Despite his double h-pawn, and due to his pair of bishops and c-file possession, black was slightly better when accepting a draw offer after 21 moves.

Top rated **GM Sethuraman Sethuraman (2639)** as white against **IM Kushagra Mohan (2400)** went for an ambitious set up with 3.e5 in a Caro-Kann. An entertaining attacking race followed as white castled short and black long. White had the better attack most of the time, but did some mistakes in a very complex position. As black came up with some counterplay, the queen endgame with four pawns for each player after 35 moves was drawish. Inviting a queen exchange at move 37 however was a blunder from black, as white efficiently exchanged the queens and demonstrated how to win a won pawn endgame.



Sethuraman vs Mohan

IM Emin Ohanyan (2434) as white in a Slav against **GM Erik Blomqvist (2523)** went for an early queen exchange at b6 and then exchanged the pawns at d5, hoping for an advantage to follow from black's two isolated b-pawns. The position later became rather deadlocked in the open c-file, and black after 20 moves invited a draw by repetition. Ohanyan played on for a win and won a queenside pawn as the position suddenly exploded with some tactical exchanges a few moves later on. Black had some compensation due to his pair of bishops and even took over the advantage following passive play from white. Black actually made a winning attempt as he exchanged one of the bishops, to reach an endgame with opposite-coloured bishops and two connected passed pawns in the center. White still was a pawn up, but unable to see the plan to stop the black pawns on acceptable terms – and so he much too early resigned in a drawn position after 40 moves.



Ohanyan vs Blomqvist

The young Indian **GM Raja Rithvik Rajavaram (2472)** as white in an Accepted Queen's Gambit against the not that young Australian **IM John-Paul Wallace (2384)** got a small but lasting edge. Black for a long time defended very well. The rook and knight endgame with five pawns for each player after 24 moves for sure was a draw. Although white immediately won a pawn at d5, the knight endgame eight moves later reportedly also was a draw, as black had an active king and would win the white a-pawn within a few moves. The game however now became complicated with an extra pawn for white. Short of time Wallace made some mistakes,. This allowed white to win the game by picking up black's kingside pawns with his knight while running his king over just in time to stop the black a-pawn.

Norwegian **IM Elham Abdulrauf (2519)** as white against Serbian **WGM Teodora Injac (2391)** came slightly better in another Queen's Gambit with Bf4, as black first went for a solid set up with c6 instead of c5. Black still equalized with a tactical c5-break, and after 21 moves the position with queen, rook, two knights and six pawns on each side was about equal. White's center advantage here was balanced by black's queenside pawn majority. As the queens and rooks later were exchanged, the double knight endgame after 35 also was equal. Black short of time however played too carelessly when she allowed white to play 37.Ne5!?, forcing off one set of knights and exchanging black's pawn at e5 for white's pawn at d4. Probably the knight endgame afterwards also first was a draw. White however now had the more active king and soon got a winning advantage after picking up the black pawn at b5.



Abdulrauf vs Injac

Estonian **GM Kaido Kulaots (2494)** also tested out 3.e5 in a Caro-Kann and got his second game win for today as white against the young Swedish **FM Edvin Trost (2398)**. Black had the thematic queenside counterplay with c5 and reportedly first was fine. Sacrificing a piece with 20.--- Bg5? although creative here was a bit loose: White went for an ice cold 21.f4!, picked up two pieces and proved able to hide his king from the storm at h1. In the end after 32 moves Kulaots had a full armada of pieces. When black gave a knight check at g3, white could just give up the queen for the disturbing knight and then play 33.f7 – with a new queen and a mate coming up.



Kulaots vs Trost

IM Jonas Hacker (2455) versus **FM Tanmay Chopra (2351)** saw a Four Knights English duel in which black despite white's pair of bishops and space advantage did well due to his e-file possession and the somewhat awkward white set up with Kf1 and Rh1. Black in the early fourth hour won a pawn by a combination, although white now took over the e-file and appeared to be healthy with queen, rook and six pawns against queen, rook and seven pawns. Exchanging off the queens might have been a strategical mistake from white, as the rook endgame with three against four pawns gave black good winning chances. Exchanging off his vital a-pawn for the black f-pawn was a definitive mistake from a white point of view, as black's passed b-pawn soon decided the game in his favor.

GM Monica Socko (2440) as white in a Semi-Slav against **Morten Andersen (2156)** made a safe start with 4.Nbd2, but suddenly got a clear advantage after opening the position with 8.e4.

The Bd6-variation chosen by Andersen here has for many years had a dubious reputation. As black applied for counterplay with 11...e5, white for unknown reasons did not use the chance to exchange the pawn. Consequently black could play 13...e4! with promising chances for a kingside attack. Both players later slowed down, and after exchanging queens black gave up

his pair of bishops to reach a very drawish endgame with two rooks, opposite-coloured bishops and five pawns on each side. None of the players noted that white blundered with 33.Kg3?, as black could now play a tricky 33...g5! with a winning attack. Probably realizing the danger white afterwards used her chance to force off one of the black rooks, after which a draw was agreed by a sound repetition.



Socko vs Andersen

GM Tiger Hillarp (2513) as black against the young German **Johannes von Mettenheim (2317)** was reported in trouble in the second hour. Something went wrong in the Tiger's Modern defence today, and white after exchanging the dark-squared bishops at h6 intervened with the king at g7 – winning a pawn with a promising kingside attack. Von Mettenheim however first became too passive and then gave up an exchange. After 27 moves white had three pawns for the exchange, but black had taken over the initiative and white still had some problems deciding what to do

with his king at e1. As black via a1 intervened to b1 with his rook, white first placed his pieces too passively with Nc1 followed by Bd1, and then just blundered with 31.f3?. Black following a very straightforward 31...Qa1 suddenly won a piece and white consequently resigned the game.



Von Mettenheim vs Hillarp

IM David Cummings (2318) as white against **FM Sambit Panda (2452)** in a Queen's Gambit with an early a6 simply exchanged on d5, and got a very slight edge due to his chances for a minority attack on the queenside. The game apparently was about to accelerate as white played 17.Qf4 followed by 18.Qc7, but then he offered a draw which was accepted. 62 year old Cummings is still doing very well among the young lions, although it is a relevant question whether he will end up with only draws.

13 year old **FM Lukas Dotzer (2416)** on the other hand is much more likely to end up with only decided games, and around 23.30 tonight succeeded in defeating the also very talented American **Shelev Oberoi (2226)**. The start was an open Ruy Lopez discussion, in which white happily accepted a disruption of the kingside pawns to win the pair of bishops. Winning the white pawn at c3 with 20.--- b4?! was risky and probably dubious from a black point of view, as white could win a pawn and



Dotzer vs Oberoi

open the kingside with 21.f5, 22.fxg6 and 23.gxh7. Black however proved able to hide his king at h8 and start counterplay against the weakened white kingside. The kingside attacks disappeared when the queens were exchanged at g8 in the fourth hour, but the remaining endgame with rook, bishop and four pawns on each side was interesting and double-edged. Black first successfully mobilized his four against two majority on the kingside and around 50 was close to winning. Sacrificing a pawn with 50.--- c4 51.bxc4 b3 however was a mistaken plan, as white could block the b1 square with his rook and keep the balance. Black at move 54 still could exchange off the bishops and win back the pawn with a draw to follow. Instead 54.--- Ra6?? blundered another pawn and gave white an easy win in the remaining endgame with three against one pawn. Black after 64 moves had rook versus queen without pawns, but this was totally lost as white could check around to win the black rook.

CM Sauat Nurgaliev (2286) versus **IM Moksh Amit Doshi (2397)** was an open Sicilian with 4.Qxd4, later reaching some kind of fairly balanced Maroczy position. In a tight battle black for a while had attacking prospects on the kingside, but white took over the initiative as he in the fourth hour intervened via the queenside with his queen and rook. As black in turn got counterplay against the white king with his queen and rook, tactical complications followed. White creatively sacrificed his knight to create very dangerous threats against the black king with his queen and rook. As black was forced to return a whole rook to avoid a mate, white after 63 moves was objectively winning with queen, rook and four pawns against queen, knight and five pawns. Sacrificing the exchange to establish a passed pawn at a6 in the queen endgame however was a mistake, as black soon could force a perpetual check against the white king.

FM Magnus Ermitsch (2277) versus **IM Mohammad Fahad Rahman (2396)** was a Sicilian Kalashnikov duel, which following many pawn exchanges became very open. Although white's pair of bishops had great potential in such a position, black with the safer king and the better pawn structure came better after snatching a pawn at a2 with his queen. Black later played a bit too slowly, allowing white to reach a probably drawish position with queen, rook, bishop and two pawns against queen, rook, bishop and three pawns. Opposite-coloured bishops however here favoured black due to the open white king. Ermitsch again running short of time anyway blundered his rook and resigned after 33 moves.

IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2387) and **FM Emerik Roulet-Dubonnet (2215)** made a slow start with a symmetrical English opening, but the game soon accelerated as black allowed white to win an exchange by 17.Bh6 and 18.Bxf8. Black got one pawn and overwhelming activity for the exchange, and after 20 moves already had a winning kingside attack. Black probably should have been able to win this before 30 moves, but white fought on well and succeeded in exchanging off the queens. The endgame with rook, bishop, knight and five pawns against rook, two knights and four pawns still was winning for black, as he had a passed pawn at g4 and the more active pieces. Exchanging the knight was a mistake which invited white into the game for some moves in the fifth hour. Black however still was a sound pawn up and soon sacrificed an exchange to let his king and bishop escort in the passed c-pawn.



Vestby-Ellingsen vs Roulet-Dubonnet
(Photo: Anniken Vestby)

CM Sverre Lye (2212) as white against **WGM Pallathur Nandhidhaa (2362)** in a Sicilian Rossolimo first came better, as his rooks in the f-file were more pointed than black's queen and rook in the d-file. This however changed very suddenly as white played 19.Nf3?, overlooking a tactical 19.--- Bxd3! which won a pawn with an obvious advantage for black. Nandhidhaa later had an extra pawn and two bishops versus two knights, but happily exchanged both bishops and the queen to reach a rook endgame with five against four pawns. White first had some chances to save this. As white chose the wrong defenceive plan, black soon could intervene on the kingside with her king and get a decisive attack on white's king and pawns.



Lye vs Nandhidhaa

FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2345) and **CM Juan Gomez Aguirre (2206)** for three hours discussed a fairly balanced Ruy Lopez, in which white had isolated pawns at a4 and d4 while black had isolated pawns at a6 and c7. 29.--- Re6? might have been a blunder but still was interesting, as white following a tactical 30.Nxf7! forced a promising but still in no way easy endgame with queen and five pawns against two rooks and three pawns. Instead of putting both his rooks on the eight rank, black later placed one rook at the eight rank and the other behind white's passed a-pawn. White following this had an instructive win by walking up the kingside with his king and pawn majority, while keeping his queen active at b8 or b7.

The Norwegian teenager duel between **Shazil Shehzad (2212)** and **FM Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2329)** started up with a closed Ruy Lopez. Not too surprising with these two players the position soon became very open. Sacrificing a center pawn probably was dubious from a black point of view, as white could keep an extra pawn at d4 with some advantage. The rook and knight endgame with an extra pawn for white still gave black fair chances for a draw in the fourth hour. Øye-Strømberg for a long while here



Shehzad vs Øye-Strømberg

defended well and reportedly did right to let the white a-pawn run while eating two pawns on the kingside. If so black's solution to stop the pawn in time however was not good enough, and following this he in the bitter end just before move 60 had to give up a full rook for the pawn.

CM Chinguun Bayaraa (2203) versus **IM Erik Hedman (2323)** was a rare line of a Classical King's Indian, in which black went for a counterattack on the queenside instead of starting the traditional attacking race on the kingside with f5. After the queens were exchanged black for some moves had a light initiative, but in the fourth hour the players still had exchanged down to a drawn endgame with two rooks, knight and four kingside pawns against two rooks, bishop and four kingside pawns.

Max Dahl (2152) as white against **FM Saad Elmi (2321)** went for a Bf4 set up in a Queen's Gambit. Black chose a slightly provocative h6, and white after exchanging the dark-squared bishops first had a promising light-square dominance. Castling long might have been overambitious as black now got some counterplay, but the position after three hours remained roughly balanced. Dahl not for the first time fell victim to his own time spending, as he short of time for move 40 helpfully exchanged down to a rook and knight endgame in which white's loose pawn structure gave black a clear advantage. Elmi again had more time left than his opponent and again efficiently used his chance to win the endgame by advancing a passed pawn in the fifth hour.

FM Bennet Hagner (2354) made a good choice as he today went for a Scotch Opening as white against **WIM Rucha Pujari (2195)**. As black had weakened her kingside by playing f6 to kick away a knight from the e5 square, 10... Bg4? was a mistake which after 11.Qc2! Bxf3 12.Bxh7+ Kh8 13.gxf3 already left white a pawn up with a more or less winning attack. Still 14 year old Hagner later offered no discount, and won in just 27 moves with a crushing attack against the black king.



Hagner vs Pujari

Arhan Chethan Anand (2285) versus **FM Mahitosh Dey (2154)** was a Semi-Slav opening which made a funny start, as white after 12.Qb3 sacrificed a knight at a5 to win back a bishop at b7. The game however soon slowed down as the queens a few moves later were exchanged on b6. White had a potential long term advantage due to his pair of bishops, but decided to exchange the dark-squared bishop for a knight to force a very drawish endgame with rooks and opposite-coloured bishops. Following this the players after 27 moves made a sensible agreement to share the point.

FM Sourath Biswas (2265) as white against **Shadi Sian (2137)** went for a London system, but put his bishop at b5 instead of the usual d3. Black following this had no problems from the opening and established a space advantage as he played c4 and f5. With all 16 pawns still on the board after 20 moves the position however remained very closed. As the queenside finally opened white for some moves had a passed a-pawn. As the a-pawns were exchanged too, the still closed queen and knight endgame appeared very drawish after 40 moves. White however played it too carelessly as he allowed the black queen to intervene behind his pawns just before move 50. Following this black well could have played on for a win instead of settling the game with a perpetual check.

The teenager duel between **Vetle Bjørge Strand (2026)** and **CM Adithya Chullikkad (2259)** was another Sicilian with 3.Bb5+, leading to another approximately balanced Maroczy as white exchanged the bishop and played c4. Three sets of minor pieces were exchanged early, but black due to his minority attack on the queenside still kept a pressure. As white



Strand vs Chullikkad

exchanged the final minor piece with 25.--- Nxa4, white should have inserted 26.a3 instead of taking back. Black's rook at b4 now could take a pawn at c4, and black following this reached an interesting endgame with queen and six pawns against two rooks and five pawns. This version was clearly better for black partly due to his passed pawn at c5, and partly as white's weak pawn at a3 made it difficult for him to activate and coordinate the rooks. Black however was unwilling to run any risk and instead accepted a draw by repetition a few moves later on.

CM Andreas Skotheim (2228) after his six-hour nightmare from the first half of the double round now played a Ruy Lopez exchange and offered a draw after eight moves against **Håkon Bentsen (2088)**. Bentsen as black was happy to accept this in a balanced position.

Johannes Hentrich (2166)
versus **Valentina Verbin (2071)**

was a much longer Ruy Lopez duel. Black was happy to exchange the queens and three sets of minor pieces early, but paid some price as her two d-pawns and two f-pawns gave white a structural advantage. Black succeeded in exchanging also the bishops and one of the d-pawns, but the double rook endgame still gave white an edge due to his better structure and queenside pawn majority.

Hentrich instructively opened the queenside, picked up black's weak pawn at f7, exchanged one of the rooks and activated his two passed queenside pawns with a won position. His final plan of exchanging the queenside pawns and run over to the kingside however was inaccurate, as black for a few moves had a draw within reach in the remaining endgame with rook and g-pawn versus rook. Verbin in turn missed her golden chance to get the king ahead of the pawn with 55... Ke6, and white after 56.Kf5 had no problems demonstrating the win with his king in front of the passed pawn.



Hentrich vs Verbin

CM Jack Mizzi (2049) versus **FM Mathias Unneland (2188)** saw a modern Catalan line in which black sacrifices back an exchange at c6. White later kept an extra pawn, but black had a lot of compensation as white's queen at h4 was more or less offside.

Opposite-coloured bishops here favoured the attacking player, and although white had a passed pawn at c5 black clearly had the pressure after intervening the seventh rank with his rook. Unneland following this could well have played on and won back the pawn at f3 instead of accepting a repetition after 32 moves.



Mizzi vs Unneland

Sigurd Lye (1980) and **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2144)** discussed a Sicilian Marocky which turned very aggressive as white played b4, f4 and g4.

21.f5? probably was too early, as black due to the strong e5 square later got a lot of counterplay. Black missed his best continuations afterwards, but still had a strong initiative and soon won a pawn in the endgame with rook and bishop versus rook and knight. 39.--- Rd5? however was a time trouble blunder, as white could win back the pawn with 40.Nxf7+ Kxf7 41.Rd7+ and 42.Rxb7. Black still had a pressure in the rook endgame, but Sigurd Lye now defended well and got his well deserved half point as the players after 60 moves ran out of pawns.



Lye vs Kreken



Myagmarsuren vs Ermitsch

Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2139) as white in a Sicilian against **Michael Ermitsch (2047)** got a pleasant pressure due to his pair of bishops, and their strength increased as black accepted to exchange both the queens and one set of rooks at d4. Black's d-pawn later went lost, and although the rook endgame was not trivial white before 40 moves assured his king a decisive intervention against black's queenside pawns.

Monika Machlik (2136) and **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2040)** in the meantime discussed an approximately balanced Rubinstein line of a Nimzo-Indian opening, in which white had the pair of bishops and black a nice knight on the c4 outpost. Black had some pressure against the white pawn at e3, but black's try for a kingside attack with an early h5-h4 got no continuation. The position still was rather closed and balanced as both players survived the first time control. Black's h-pawn attack however backfired in the fifth hour as white found a good plan to win the too advanced pawn at h4 with Bf2-Qb1-Qe1. Black's position following this just collapsed, and white soon won two exchanges with a decisive attack against the black king.



Machlik vs Fiskaaen

Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (2103) versus **Peder Marcus Aamodt (2022)** was a positionally messy Sicilian in which black got the pair of bishops and the d-file, although white still came better due to black's weak pawns at c6 and c5. White's advantage grew as black exchanged one of bishops and allowed the pawn at c5 to be eaten by white's knight. Black's idea turned out to be a piece sacrifice, as he would give up the bishop at a6 to double his queen and rook on the seventh rank. White reportedly could have taken the piece, but understandably considered this too dangerous. As white instead forced the black queen to a3 and then exchanged the bishop at a6 for his knight, white soon was only one pawn up in a rook endgame with rather few pawns left. Black defending with one against two pawns assured the draw by advancing his a-pawn to a3 with the rook in front of the pawn at a1. Amazingly, and probably still unknown to both players when they left the playing venue, the final position agreed drawn after 40.g6+? was a win for black! White due to his open king at e3 could no longer avoid sacrificing a full rook for the h-pawn – a likely continuation worth to remember for later occasions is 40.--- Kg7 41.Ra6 a2! 42.Kd2 Rh1! 43.Rxa2 Rh2+ 44.Kc1 Rxa2.

Jonas Hodneland Rasmussen (1976) due to a car breakdown unfortunately arrived some 40 minutes delayed for his white game against **Pankit Mota (2101)**. As his opponent finally arrived, Mota had no problems equalizing against a slow Queen's pawn fianchetto with 1.d4 2.Nf3 and 3.g3. 18.Red1? later was a blunder from white, but strangely none of the players noticed that black after 18.--- Nxe4 19.Qxe4 could have won a very sound pawn with 19.--- Bxc5! Black instead offered a queen exchange with 19.--- Qd5?, but still got a pressure against white's backward d4 pawn in the rooks and bishop endgame. Both players made some mistakes in the double rook endgame. Black still was winning most of the time, and in the fifth hour his two connected passed pawns on the kingside made the single rook endgame a safe win.

Martin Øksendal (2060) versus **Jiahao Eric Ji (1959)** was a Catalan in which all the center pawns and most of the pieces were exchanged before move 25. This left an endgame with rook, bishop, knight and five pawns on each side, in which black's scattered kingside pawns gave white a very slight plus. The tide here first was in favour of black as he succeeded



Øksendal vs Ji

in exchanging the pawn at f6 and get counterplay against the white queenside pawns. Winning these pawns back, black for a few moves was a pawn up. White's rook and bishop however still were active, and combined with a marching kingside pawn majority they soon decided after black lost his key defence pawn at e6 after 40 moves.

Saketh Pedagandham (2074) versus **Sindre Ytrestøyl (1987)** was a rare Caro-Kann with 1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5, predictably leading to an approximately balanced isolated queen's pawn position. As white allowed black's knight to be exchanged for the light-squared bishop at b3, white later due to his pair of bishops had a pleasant pressure against white's hanging pawns at c4 and d5. Black later won both the fixed pawns. As white then could exchange queens and win back a black pawn at a7, the remaining endgame with rook, bishop and three kingside pawns against rook, bishop and two kingside pawns after 40 moves should be a draw. White's isolated pawns at f4 and h4 however still caused him some problems. As white blundered the key f4 pawn at move 41 black soon reached a totally winning position.

Ask Amundsen (1937) and **Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (1930)** meanwhile discussed an Italian opening variation in which black won the pair of bishops by hunting the white bishop to b3 and then exchanging it for a knight. As black had put his queen and rooks on the queenside, white got a dangerous attack as he following some tactical exchanges at move 22 gave up his bishop at h6. 25.f3? afterward however was too slow, and black following this got the time needed to consolidate his position with a piece won for two pawns. Evenshaug later made a good decision as he temporarily sacrificed two more pawns to exchange the queens. Although white later had rook and seven pawns against rook, bishop and three pawns, black was clearly better as white could not save his many weak pawns for long. Evenshaug instinctively went around to pick up pawns and exchanged the rooks along the road, ending in a safely won endgame with bishop and two pawns against two pawns.



Amundsen vs Evenshaug

Manmay Chopra (2113) and **Linus Sandstad (1912)** entered a positionally tense Sicilian in which a tactical Nd5 resulted only in exchanges. After 20 moves the players had reached an endgame with two rooks, knight and six pawns against two rooks, bishop and six pawns. White had a slight edge due to his better pawn structure and his knight was arguably better than the black bishop. Black solved his minor piece problem with a tactical exchange, after which the players via a drawish rook endgame soon reached a dead drawn pawn endgame.



Chopra vs Sandstad

Finally, 18 year old **Alexander Rosol (2076)** and 12 year old **Philip Rosol (2010)** following a disappointing first half of the tournament had an unlucky brother duel on board 46 tonight. The older and higher rated brother had the white pieces and played for a win with some kind of extended Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, sacrificing a loose pawn at f3 and his d4-pawn within the first six moves. Black came better after returning one of the pawns to exchange off the queens. Further complications followed as white soon afterwards also sacrificed an exchange at h1. Although white got a nice knight at d6 he never really appeared close to compensation for an exchange plus a pawn. As the game went Philip just before move 40 neatly returned the exchange to reach an easily winning rook endgame with four against two kingside pawns.



A. Rosol vs P. Rosol
(Photo: Anniken Vestby)

Open Group

The Open in round 5 produced two very exciting firework games on the top boards. 13 year old **Rafe Rehman (1824)** in the early middle game went for a hardball attack as white against leading **Sigurd Kittilsen (1822)**. Kittilsen for a long time defended well, but running short of time for 40 moves he due to his open king had a hard time defending with queen, rook, bishop and four pawns on each side. As white had to watch out for his weak first rank, black tried to save himself with a clever 35... Bf4? – noting that white could not take the bishop either with his rook at f5 or the bishop at e5. The bishop sacrifice however turned out to be too clever by half as white hit back with the amazing 36.Rxf7!! – winning black's queen for the rook and bishop with a won endgame to follow.



Rehman vs Kittilsen

Meanwhile, in a wild King's Indian game on the second board, **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1813)** as white against **Erlend Entner (1571)** first had been totally lost and then totally winning. The position after the first time control was tense with queen, rook, bishop and two pawns versus queen, rook, bishop and three pawns. With more than one hour left on the clock, Gåsland much too fast went for an apparently promising 43.Rb7?!, probably expecting 43... Qa8 44.Rxc7 with a dangerous attack coming up along the seventh rank. Entner however found the stunning counterattack with 43... Rxc3+! 44.Kh4 Rh3+. While white was about to resign, black suddenly offered a draw – not realizing that he had not only reached a perpetual check with his queen, but also created a mating attack with his queen and dark-squared bishop!



Gåsland vs Entner

Third board duel between **Dag Arild Andersen (1776)** and **Tim Spanton (1806)** on the other hand was a relatively safe draw.

20 year old **Sigurd Lauvås Gaure (1616)** on the fourth board sacrificed a knight at h5 and won a nice attacking game as white against unpredictable 63 year old **Karim Ali (1773)**.

The Open had more draws and no big surprises on the lower boards today.

Sara Gilsdottir (1422) scoring a half point as white from a slightly better position against first rated **Jon Arne Stokhaug (1843)** probably still qualifies as a surprise, although Stokhaug has been rather tame following his delayed start and Gilsdottir obviously is underrated.

Definitely underrated also is 11 year old **Henrik Nome (1073)**, today winning heavy material as white against our jovial German chessfriend **Oliver Bach (1668)**.

Top board pairings for round 6 following this will be Gaure white against Rehman, Kittilsen white against Andersen and Spanton white against Gåsland. Gaure and Rehman are now sharing the lead at 4.0/5, hence a winner in their internal meeting will have a very good chance at least to reach one of the top three places qualifying for the next GM group.

3 photos by Anniken Vestby (credited) and the rest by Tom Eriksen