

# FAGERNES INTERNATIONAL AUTUMN 2022

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 2



### GM Group

Round two of this GM-group first of all was a remarkably hard-fought one: All but one of the first 17 boards in the end had a winner, and only four out of 30 games were drawn. Then this round was a remarkably good round for the top rated players, as 15 of the above-mentioned 16 game winners were higher rated than their opponents(!).

The surprise men on the top boards today were 14 year old Norwegian Aksel Bu Kvaløy winning a long game against IM Linus Johansson, and 18 year old Andre Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch drawing an even longer game against GM Kaido Kulaots.

The 11 GMs this round made a very respectable 10–1 score, but 15 year old Norwegian Shadi Sian still had a memorable day as he made a draw (from a won position) as black against the still somewhat shaky Danish GM Alan Stig Rasmussen.

GMs Narayanan, Sasikiran, Andersen, Puranik and Arkell following this can be found among the eleven players at 2/2, while top rated Praggnanandhaa together with GM-colleagues Sethuraman, Kulaots and Urkedal are following half a step behind at 1.5.

This round's first board meeting between **GM S L Narayanan (2663)** and **IM/WGM Padmini Rout (2390)** also was the first, but for sure not last, game between two titleholders from India. Via 1.Nf3 play transposed into a positional and closed King's Indian position, in which both played fast and confidently from the opening. Black probably played too fast and confident, as white after 16.a5! already was about to make a decisive queenside breakthrough. White following this won first one pawn at c5 and then another pawn at c7, while keeping control on the kingside due to his strong knight at e4. 1–0 after 31 moves and two hours, as white with two extra pawns at c4 and d6 was about to start a decisive seventh rank attack.



Narayanan vs Rout



**Nielsen vs Sasikiran**

**FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2384)** versus **GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2636)** was another King's Indian struggle. Sasikiran first played fast, but after snatching white's key pawn at e4 with his queen, he suddenly spent more than 20 minutes for his move 15. Nielsen creatively sacrificed a knight on c6, within a few more moves, reaching a position in which white had rook and three pawns for bishop and knight. As white had three connected passed pawns on the queenside, his position appeared close to winning around move 20–25. This soap-like position however was very difficult to

handle for both players, and Sasikiran instructively activated his three minor pieces to create disturbing counterplay. As black had his pair of bishops plus a strong knight at e5, the position probably was in some kind of dynamic balance before white blundered with 35.Re1?? – allowing black to win an exchange with a very straightforward 35... Bb4. Sasikiran although short of time efficiently cashed in the exchange. Material later still was approximately in balance as white had three pawns for a knight, but black due to his ongoing kingside attack had a decisive advantage and soon won more heavy material.

The third board was a Scandinavian duel, in which Danish **GM Mads Andersen (2604)** and Swedish **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2379)** discussed a relatively sharp Russian opening line. After the four knights were exchanged white had the more active pieces, but due to his isolated double c-pawns he had the long term problem of an inferior pawn structure. Following some tactical exchanges the position opened, but it was still in material balance and roughly in positional balance with queen, rook, bishop and six pawns left on each side after 22.Qxe2.



**Andersen vs Carlsson**

22... Qxc3?? instead of exchanging the queens however was a way too greedy pawn snatch, as white could play a neon-flashing 23.Qe7! Bh3 24.Rb7 with a highly dangerous seventh-rank attack. Forced to exchange off the queens under much worse circumstances a few moves later on, Carlsson found himself two pawns down in the rook and bishop endgame. Andersen took his time on the clock and had less than two minutes left after 34 moves, but as the bishops were not opposite-coloured he had it all under control on the board.



**Sarkar vs Puranik**

**IM Justin Sarkar (2350) versus GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2603)** was a Four Knights Opening which lit up before 10 moves, as black pseudo-sacrificed a knight on e4. Black won back the knight due to the e-file pin, leaving a position in which white had the better pawn structure and black the pair of bishops. White's chances appeared better as black had two c-pawns and a somewhat airy king at c8. White's decision to sacrifice an exchange for a pawn at c5 however soon proved dubious. Although white after 25 moves had a bishop and three pawns for a rook, he was still in deep trouble

as black's queen and pair of rooks gave him a decisive attack against the white king at g1. Sarkar's defence collapsed as he ran short of both time and moves, and so Puranik smashed through by a nice rook sacrifice at g2.



**Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch vs Kulaots**

**FM Andre Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch (2329) as white against GM Kaido Kulaots (2515)** went for a King's Indian Advance. As white exchanged his d5-pawn at c4, white instead of allowing a queen exchange went for a tactical 7.Ne5!?. As black wisely concluded 7... cxd3?! 8.Qb3! much too dangerous, he instead allowed 8.Nxc4 with a positional edge for white. Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch following this had a promising start of the game, and after ten moves he was nearly half an hour ahead on the clock. The young Norwegian without any respect played for a

win, sacrificing his b-pawn to open the b-file and intervening on d6 with his knight. The GM under pressure defended very well, returning the pawn at b7 to get counterplay on the queenside.

The heat increased further as Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch sacrificed a piece for two pawns, with sufficient compensation as white had a pair of bishops and black a somewhat shaky king at e8.

Exchanging one of the bishops for a knight at d7 was a mistake, as black afterwards could sacrifice a rook for the other white bishop and reach a position with queen, bishop, knight and four pawns against queen, rook and five pawns.

Although «much better» for black according to the computers, this still was very difficult to play for any human with the black pieces due to his still shaky king. Kulaots played hard for a win as he left a repetition of checks by placing his king out in the air at f6 at move 30. With both players running short of time for move 40, Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch in turn made a big decision to force off the queens at f4. The remaining endgame with rook and three pawns versus bishop, knight and three pawns gave black a material advantage, but chances still were about balanced as white had a distant passed pawn at a5.

Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch continued his strong play despite time pressure, eventually forcing black to sacrifice the knight for the passed a-pawn. This still did not change the outcome, as black had a solid fortress with bishop and three kingside pawns against rook and two kingside pawns.





**Abdrlauf vs Thavandiran**

Norwegian **IM Elham Abdrlauf (2495)** and Canadian **IM Shiyam Thavandiran (2353)** meanwhile investigated a French Winawer with 4.Ne2!? dxe4, in which white after winning back the pawn at e4 had a little more space for his pieces. Abdrlauf again played fast from the start, and castling long after 10 moves he came nearly half an hour ahead on the clock. All the knights left before move 15 and all the bishops before move 20 in this game. Then all the rooks left before 30 moves, leaving a drawish queen endgame with four pawns on each side. Well ahead on the clock with the better

pawn structure and a queenside pawn majority, Abdrlauf still played on for a full point. Under growing pressure on the board as well as on the clock, Thavandiran finally lost his defence after five hours, allowing white and his rabbit king to escort in the c-pawn. 1–0 after 66 moves, as Abdrlauf coolly demonstrated how his king could escape the checks with two queens against one queen. Thavandiran accidentally misplaced one of his pieces while making his move 64 with one second left on the clock, but Abdrlauf gently invited his opponent to correct the fallen pawn before demonstrating the win.

**FM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2278)** and **IM Linus Johansson (2461)** had another French defence duel. This one was a long Tarrasch duel, leading to fairly balanced chances on the board and half an hour extra for black on the clock. Johansson first placed his dark-squared bishop in a modest position at e7, but then accelerated in the center with 14.--- e5!?. The pawn advance itself reportedly was fine. As Johansson played wrong afterwards, he still lost the e5 pawn and drifted into a rather depressing endgame in which white had two rooks, bishop and six pawns against two rooks, one bishop and five pawns. Exchanging one set of rooks afterwards was a mistake from a black point of view, as more rooks here definitely would have given more counterplay and more chances for a draw. The single rook and bishop endgame later was close to winning for white, and 14 year old Kvaløy demonstrated mature endgame technique as he won the final rook endgame safely after 60 moves.



**Kvaløy vs Johansson**



**Rameshbabu vs Nilsen**

**IM Vaishali Rameshbabu (2451)** versus **Tobias Lang Nilsen (2280)** was even another French defence duel, this one an Advance variation in which white sacrificed her d-pawn in a rare sideline of the Milner-Barry Gambit. White also had a loose isolated pawn at c3, but her active pieces combined with black's lasting problems developing the kingside still gave white the better chances. Lagging half an hour behind on the clock after 13 moves, Lang Nilsen had an uphill struggle ahead. Black eventually succeeded in exchanging off both the white bishops. Vaishali however made the better

evaluation of the position as her open b-file and octopus knights at d4 and d6 soon gave her a crushing attack against the black king at b8.



**Shehzad vs Ghazarian**

Believe it or not, but the teenager duel between **Shazil Shehzad (2224)** and **IM Kirk Ghazarian (2446)** saw a fourth French defence – with a fourth completely different variation. Shehzad chose 2.d3 and 3.Qe2, entering a King's Indian Advance line in which black had no problems equalizing after exchanging off the dark-squared bishops at e7.

A typical positional struggle later followed as white due to his e5-pawn had more space on the kingside, while black had a pawn armada running forward on the queenside. 24.--- f5?! might have been overambitious as

white could play 25.exf6 e.p. with some counterplay against the isolated pawns at e6. It was still creative from a black point of view.

As Shehzad ran short of time in a complex position, Ghazarian soon came better after exchanging his pawn at e6 for the white pawn at b2. Black's passed pawn at a4 later made the big difference in a materially balanced position with queen, rook, bishop and four pawns against queen, rook, two knights and four pawns. White following this anyway was under severe pressure when he at move 33 made a time trouble blunder, allowing black to play a3 without any plan to stop the pawn afterwards. 16 year old Ghazarian soon followed up with a2 and a1Q, winning about a ton of material before 40 moves.



**Kaasen vs Kistrup**

The junior duel between **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2445)** and **FM Nicolai Kistrup (2274)** started up with a classical and positional Italian opening, in which black for unknown reasons spent one hour for the first ten moves. White following this had a slight queenside initiative and some 50 minutes more on the clock after 11.a4. Black for a long time played very well in the middle game, and even kept an advantage for some moves after exchanging all the bishops. Although the f5 outpost was very important for black, placing a knight there was a serious mistake, as white after

exchanging the knight got some advantage due to his passed pawn at e5. Exchanging the last knights on d4 hardly improved the situation, as white later had a strong kingside pressure and could raise an Alekhine's gun with two rooks and queen in the g-file.

Kistrup although having one minute left after 27 moves fought on bravely and succeeded in avoiding mate, but white then could exchange at g6 to reach an easily won rook endgame with an extra pawn.

The young Danish FM fought stubbornly on, and due to his passed d-pawn nearly made the game exciting again in the sixth hour. Kaasen with three passed pawns and much more time on the clock probably still had this under control.

Yesterday's sensation man **Per Fredrik Holand (2024)** bravely entered a Sicilian Najdorf discussion as white against **FM Semen Mitusov (2415)**. Both players had a reasonable speed, and black reportedly was better after he was allowed to play Bg5 and exchange off white's bishop at e3. A tense struggle followed as both players castled short and then went for a kingside attack. The advantage jumped a bit back and forth later on.



**Holand vs Mitusov**

Black however was ahead on the clock almost all of the time and had the more dangerous attack most of the time. Well deserved he won decisive material before 40 moves.



English **GM Keith Arkell (2413)** today had white against Norwegian **FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2161)**. Almost certainly having noted his much younger opponent's attacking win against another GM yesterday, Arkell went for a solid Colle system with 1.Nf3 2.d4 3.c3. Black used his chance to establish a space advantage on the queenside, but the position for a while locked down after two sets of minor pieces were exchanged. Chances after 22 moves were fairly balanced on the clock and board, although opposite-coloured bishops could give both players some middle game possibilities. Both players went for a win as Al-Tarboush first sacrificed a pawn at f4 to open the kingside, after which Arkell sacrificed an exchange at e5 to turn the now open kingside against black's king. Both players following a fast start had much time left for the critical fourth hour decisions here. The GM spent much more time than the FM, but also made the much better moves, forcing black into tactical exchanges that left white a pawn up in the rook endgame. This endgame was winning due to white's passed h-pawn and more active pieces. Arkell, always at his best in the endgames, had few problems winning this one.



**Welling vs Praggnanandhaa**

63 year old **IM Gerard Welling (2272)** is exactly in the middle of the Elo list in this tournament. Following this he before the first round prepared to play either against the highest rated or against the lowest rated player of the field. After drawing a remarkably well-played game as black against the lowest rated player in the first round, he now instead got white against top rated **GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu (2687)** in the second round!

White went for a solid but somewhat slow and old-fashioned English opening after 1.Nf3 2.e3 and 3.c4. Black by sound development reached a balanced position before 10 moves, and after 13 moves he was already slightly ahead on the board as well as on the clock. White tried to limit the dangers by allowing the dark-squared bishops to be exchanged, although this left black with a very pleasant pressure against white's backward pawn at d3. Pragg in an inspired mood redirected his knight to the strong d4 square and soon afterwards got a decisive advantage, as Welling much too cheaply gave up a pawn at f4. White later failed to come up with anything more creative than a queen exchange, and respectfully stopped the clock in a sinking rook and knight endgame after 35 moves.



**Sethuraman vs Ytrestøyl**

**GM Sethuraman P. Sethuraman (2645)** and **Sindre Ytrestøyl (2045)** had an exact 600 points Elo gap between the players, and white following this was the biggest favourite of this round. 16 year old Ytrestøyl still went for a provocative 1.--- c6 and 3.--- c5?!, reaching a French-like Caro Kann line in which black temporarily gave up the c5-pawn. Black after castling long eventually won back the pawn at c5 and still was not much worse after 22 moves. So far so good from an Ytrestøyl point of view.

23.--- Rd7? however was a much too careless mistake and after 24.Rb3 then

24.--- Qc6?? was a clearcut blunder, as white after 25.Rc1! soon won a piece due to the pin of black's c5 bishop.

Norwegian **GM Frode Urkedal (2523)** and German **Laurin Perkampus (2123)** had a long travel together to their postponed second round meeting, as both had played the last round of the European Chess Club Cup in Austria yesterday. Arriving to Norway with the same plane Monday afternoon, the players with Eivind Kreken's helpful father as a driver arrived Fagernes around 19.30 in the evening.

As the game finally started Urkedal apparently had the much better preparation for this Grünfeld Exchange line, as he came half an hour ahead on the clock

with some center advantage after 12 moves. Black went for counterplay on the kingside with e5 followed by f5-f4, and after 17 moves had more or less balanced the chances on the board.

Black still had some worries as he lagged some 45 minutes behind on the clock. After 23 moves the queens were exchanged and the position still was very close to equal, although white had a few more active possibilities with «60 minutes against 6 minutes» on the clock. Perkampus in this situation took a big decision as he advanced his g-pawn, trying to exchange of the remaining kingside pawns. Urkedal cashed in a pawn and although black had some compensation, his position was demanding to handle with only one minutes left after 28 moves. Not unexpectedly the 2100-player short of time failed to find the best defence moves under pressure on the clock, and so the GM could decide by a nice and direct attack against the black king at f8.

Despite the long travel the game was a fairly normal white win for the GM, and both players appeared happy to finish before 23.30. Urkedal made a strong result as undefeated with a 2564-performance in the European Chess Club Cup, and it will be exciting to see what he can do after the delayed start with 1.5/2 in this tournament.



**Urkedal vs Perkampus**





**Kreken vs Stokke**

**Eivind Grunt Kreken (2107)** arrived from the European Chess Club Cup with the same plane and car as Urkedal and Perkampus. Reaching Fagernes around 19.30 he still had to wait one hour more, as **IM Kjetil Stokke (2307)** for work reasons (reportedly including a delayed helicopter) arrived even more delayed. When the game finally started Stokke's strategy was to play extremely fast, in a Sicilian Maroczy position which he is very familiar with.

Black had no problems and even came better following an early queen exchange. Although white had a pair of bishops, black due to his control over the c-file and his dark-square dominance was better on the board plus one hour ahead on the clock after 20 moves. After the dark-squared bishops too were exchanged, the endgame with two rooks, bishop and seven pawns against two rooks, knight and seven pawns for sure was a draw. Black still was better, as his knight on c5 was superior to white's rather passive light-squared bishop. Beside, after 22 moves black had left 1 hour and 25 minutes against 18 minutes for white.

Black found no way to open the queenside without allowing the minor pieces to be exchanged.

The double rook endgame following this «should be» drawish, although white had an inferior pawn structure and only three minutes left on the clock. Sacrificing a pawn to exchange one set of rooks might have been worth a try for white, but if so he definitely should have taken back at b3 with the a-pawn and tried to create counterplay with the passed new b-pawn. As he instead took back with the king, black could take a pawn at g3 with check and reach a winning position.

Stokke in turn however played too fast and became too passive when retreating his rook to a6.

Following this white for a few moves had a draw within reach when defending with one against two pawns in the rook endgame. Running short of time for the second time control as well, Kreken in turn became too passive with his king, allowing black to win the a-pawn and reach a won endgame with rook and two pawns against rook.

Losing this game around 01.30 obviously was a disappointment for 16 year old Kreken, arriving from a strong 2252-performance in the ECC. He still handled the situation very well, blaming no one but his own opening moves. Urkedal, Perkampus, Kreken and Stokke all are very welcome guests in our tournament, and following this long Monday they are in from the start of round three tomorrow.



**Ingebretsen vs Melaa**

The Norwegian junior duel between **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2363)** and **Sondre Melaa (2223)** was a Grünfeld with 5.Bd2!?, in which white got the traditional center advantage. Black with a double fianchetto set up however got enough counterplay against white's center pawns at d4 and e4. d5 later was thematic but probably overambitious from a white point of view, as the isolated white pawn became a weakness more than an

asset. 20.--- Ne5? however was a mistake soon leading to a collapse of the black position, as white instead of helpfully exchanging off the knights could (and did) play 21.Nh4! with a highly unpleasant threat of 22.Nf5+. 21.--- Kf8? then was a blunder as white had 22.Qh6+ Kg8 followed by 23.Nf5 and a decisive win of material.



**Cherniaiev vs Amundsen**

**Tykhon Cherniaiev (2239)** versus **Ask Amundsen (1869)** was an interesting duel between two of the young surprise men from last night.

12 year old Cherniaiev now was a big favourite as white, and went for a Catalan line probably transposing into an English fianchetto as black played c5 followed by cxd4. Following inaccurate play from black, white had the much more active pieces after 10.Bf4 – threatening the black queen at c7.

10.--- Ne5? was a highly risky choice, allowing white to play 11.Nb5! and 12.b4! with very strong pressure. Cherniaiev increased the pressure by establishing a passed pawn at d6, and then efficiently smashed down the last black defence line with a tactical blow at c6.

1–0 came very well deserved after 26 moves, as white had won a bishop plus a rook.





**Krivenko vs Demchenko**

16 year old Estonian **Dion Krivenko (2107)** as white against 35 year old FIDE GM **Anton Demchenko (2645)** entered an Open Sicilian, but then left the myriad of opening lines by playing 4.Qxd4.

White first appeared better as black played a slightly awkward set up with d6–f6–g6. Black’s position however improved a lot as white put his knight on d5 – inviting black immediately to kick it back with e6. After queens were exchanged a few moves later on, black’s center gave him a pleasant plus. Krivenko fought on well and succeeded in getting some counterplay due to his active

kingside knights. Still black was about to win a pawn with promising winning chances, when white short of time blundered with 37.Ne7+?. Demchenko following this also won a second pawn, and as his extra pawns were connected passed kingside pawns the rook and knight endgame was a trivial win.

Danish GM **Alan Stig Rasmussen (2531)** as white against Norwegian junior **Shadi Sian (2108)** went for a closed and patient Semi-Slav duel, and first got an edge as he was allowed to park a dominating knight on the key e5 square. White following this could play 12.f4 and 13.Rf3 with a promising attack coming up.

Sian however defended well while Rasmussen spent a lot of time without finding the best attacking plans, leaving a highly unclear position after white sacrificed a bishop on g6. Although white’s rooks at g1 and f7 were considered unhealthy

for the black king at g8, black still had a piece more and according to the computer programs was winning around move 30. Sacrificing an exchange more for a bishop at f5 was insufficient, but still a good practical choice from a white point of view.

The position around move 40 appeared very messy, as white now had connected passed pawns at d5 and e6 plus an open g-file and a long diagonal against g7. Black however still had a rook for a pawn with enough protection of his king-saving knight at g7. The heartless computers following this still gave the position as -6 when black decided to draw the game by a repetition of checks after 43 moves. Draw as black against a GM still of course was a great result and a very interesting experience for 15 year old Sian.



**Rasmussen vs Sian**





**Verbin vs Roulet-Dubonnet**

**Valentina Verbin (2075) and Emerik Våpenstad Roulet-Dubonnet (2343)** meanwhile discussed a Sicilian Taimanov line, in which black had just about enough counterplay on the queenside to balance white's space advantage on the kingside. Black left an invitation to a draw by repetition after 25 moves, but underestimated the dangers on the kingside as he a few moves later overlooked a decisive bishop sacrifice at f7. Roulet-Dubonnet fought on well from a rather hopeless position, sacrificing an exchange to get a pair of barking bishops.

This could have been a classical double bishop sacrifice game – if Verbin after the time control had found a brilliant win with 41.Bxg7+!. As she instead started to move her active pieces backward, black's all the more powerful bishops a few moves later on gave him a winning advantage. Black in turn became too greedy when snatching a pawn at b2, overlooking a tactical 48.c4! which forced an exchange of queens. Verbin continued to defend very well for the next moves, exchanging one of the black bishops and forcing a drawn endgame with two rooks and two pawns versus rook, bishop and three pawns. Black's passed pawn in the end reached a2 with sufficient protection from the bishop at f7. As white's rooks had a sufficient control of the a1 square, a draw was soon agreed.



**Hausken vs Frederic**

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (2050) versus Clément Frederic (2234)** finally was another French defence duel, and Frederic following this today was the only player using the opening from his home country. The game reached a Classical Tarrach position, white playing with an isolated pawn at d4 and black with hanging pawns at d5 and e6. White after 19.Nc5 was slightly better on the board and some 20 minutes ahead on the clock. Black however was given a chance of tactical exchanges, after 28 moves reaching a fairly balanced

position with two rooks, bishop and six pawns against two rooks, knight and six pawns. White however had some long term challenges due to his inferior pawn structure in the rook and minor piece endgame. Black neatly demonstrated this as he transported his rook around to c8 – giving white the unpleasant choice between exchanging off the rooks or giving up the c-file. White at that stage anyway was in deep trouble. Exchanging off the rooks still was the wrong choice, as black had no sorrows and a lot of fun in the endgame with knight and six pawns against bishop and six pawns.



**Prilleltensky vs Bjerke**

**Matan Prilleltensky (2222)** and **FM Richard Bjerke (2096)** on the other hand discussed a Nimzo-Indian opening, in which Prilleltensky played the ambitious Sämisch set up with 4.a3. Bjerke (of course) used his chance to disrupt white's pawn structure by exchanging the bishop for a knight on c3. First demonstrating the traditional attack against white's pawn at c4 with Na5 and Ba6, he later castled short and tried to block the queenside while starting a pawn storm on the kingside.

This grand strategy worked out very well, as black after 19 moves was 40 minutes ahead on the clock and much better on the board. Although Bjerke aged 64 now is rated below 2100, he is a merited player with two IM-norms. Prilleltensky after the game was deeply impressed by Bjerke's depth of understanding in this middle game, and the American considered his own position ready for resignation around move 15–30.

Sacrificing a rook to get rid of the disturbing white knight at f5 was not strictly necessary, but still more than sufficient for black. Having some 20 minutes against one left on the clock, Bjerke however suddenly lost touch with the position just before 40 moves, and failed to find any of the many promising plans. Prilleltensky following this succeeded in getting some counterplay on the a-file. After 40 moves a fairly balanced position with queen, rook, bishop and five pawns against queen, rook, knight and five pawns appeared on the board. White felt so relieved that he even missed a win, as 42.Bf4! to exchange white's knight at e5 would have been a very strong plan. Instead snatching a loose pawn at h4, white true enough came a pawn up. As black had a lot of counterplay, this queen and minor piece endgame was drawn by a fairly sound repetition after 55 moves.

**Heine N. Johannessen (2033)** versus **Jacob Templen Grave (2221)** was another duel between two talented Norwegian juniors. Black played a modern Queen's Gambit line with the bishop on b4, after which white went for a long castle. Although thematic, 9.— d4?! probably was too ambitious as white soon got a promising pressure against the pawn. Instead of just losing the pawn, black tried to keep the material balance with a tactical 12.--- Nxd4?!. White first handled the situation very well, and after the queens left the board he had a won position with rook, bishop, two knights and four pawns against two rooks, knight and five pawns.

Exchanging the bishop for a knight at f6 was a mistake, although disrupting black's pawn structure, as black later had a less exposed king and could active his passive rook at h8 by playing h5. White still had the better of it with rook, two knights and three pawns against two rooks and four pawns after 25 moves, but the position now was much more double-edged and demanded accurate play from both sides. The momentum around that time changed in favour of black, as white spent way too much time without finding a good plan to coordinate his knights. As Johannessen had only seconds left on his clock he blundered it all away with 29.Ne8?! Rd1+ 30.Kc2?? – losing the knight after 30.--- Rd8!, as 31.Nc7 now would lose to the c-file pin after 31.--- Rc8.

**FM Mathias Unneland (2185)** as white against **Vetle Bjørge Strand (2053)** went for an English fianchetto, transposing into some kind of King's Indian Advance. After white exchanged with 9.cxd5, black strangely took back with the c-pawn – allowing white to win a pawn with 10.Qc8+ Qd8 11.Qxb7. As black found nothing better than to exchange off the queens afterwards, white after 15 moves was a very sound pawn up with a two against one majority on the queenside.



**Unneland vs Strand**

Unneland later took his time to complete the win, but still had it well under control in the rooks and minor pieces endgame. White first had an extra pawn plus a pair of bishops, then after move 27 an exchange more. Still a «tactical and practical» player, Unneland after 50 moves gave back the exchange to force a rook endgame in which his passed a-pawn was absolutely decisive.



**Westrum vs Ganta**

**Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2156)** versus **Joel P. Ganta (2031)** was an English fianchetto, in which white's Botvinnik set up with c4–d3–e4 gave him a slight plus from the opening. White's advantage then suddenly increased to a winning attack after black played a strange Ng5 followed by Bh6, fatally weakening the long diagonal a1–h8.

Westrum instructively put his bishop at b2 and

the queen at c3, winning a pawn at e5 with an overwhelming position after 21 moves.

Finally realizing the dangers when they were much too close, Ganta tried to complicate by tactical counterplay on the kingside. White however kept his dominating pair of bishops, and in the final position after 34 moves had an extra bishop plus a decisive attack.





**Austad vs Liabøtrø**

**Eirik Strøm Austad (1985)** versus **FM Pål-Ole Liabøtrø (2145)** saw a heated Milner-Barry gambit discussion in a French Advance opening variation. Austad played hardball by sacrificing both his d4 and e5 pawns. Due to his pair of bishops and active rooks he reportedly first had enough compensation. Black however got the help needed to find a safe home for his king at f7, after which white's compensation for the two pawns vanished. White got some pressure against the white king position by advancing his h-pawn to h5, but then lost it again as he strangely played h6 instead of hxg6.

Austad later succeeded opening the kingside against black's king by g4 and f5, although this also left his own king at f2 more unsafe. Sacrificing a rook for the black knight at e5 in this situation was consequent, but still dubious from a white point of view. The decisive turning point in this game came during mutual time pressure, as black with 38... Rg8! or 38... Qf6! could turn the open kingside against white's king. Instead 38... exf5? helpfully opened the position for white's attack. As 40... Qf8? was a blunder, white within a few moves after the time control won back a piece and some pawns with a decisive advantage.



**Østensen vs Stray**

**Nicolai Østensen (2136)** as white against **Gunnar Stray (2015)** went for 1.c4 and an English finchetto. White first appeared slightly better in the reversed Sicilian position that followed. Black lagged somewhat behind on the clock, but did fine on the board after exchanging off the light squared bishop at g2 and parking a knight on the d4 outpost. About to kick back the white knight from the key d5 square after 23... c6, black had taken over the initiative. Black's advantage increased as he later intervened in the open a-file with his rook, winning the backward white pawn at d3.

Stray for the second round in a row however lost his concentration in the crucial fourth hour, and the tide soon turned as white got the chance to regroup his knight to the strong d6 outpost. Østensen following this soon got a decisive initiative, but in turned halted to win back the pawn at d4. Both players short of time made a few more mistakes before the time control. As white at move 38 missed a chance to establish a decisive passed pawn, black still had very good drawing chances with rook, bishop and three pawns against rook, knight and four pawns after the first time control. Black's decision to play g5 on the kingside instead of just removing white's key pawn at c5 however gave white some new hope, as white kept his last queenside pawn and got a new attacking target at h5. Black following this anyway was in trouble when he after 53 moves blundered a piece.

Today we definitely had a new Fagernes record for most French Defence opening duels, as the Norwegian juniors **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1952)** and **Mathias Lind Schouten (2128)** contributed with a rather unbalanced French Winawer game. Getting the time needed to exchange off his troublesome light-squared bishop via a6, black due to his superior pawn structure was better after 16 moves. White with scattered queenside pawns played creatively for counterplay against the black pawn at c5 and eventually won the pawn, although black's active pieces and better structure gave him the much easier position to play with some 40 minutes more on the clock. Black's advantage later increased as he succeeded in intervening in the b-file and win back the white pawn at a3. The game continued until move 39, but the final ten moves were not too exciting as black's extra pawn was a powerful passed a-pawn.



**Myagmarsuren vs Schouten**

**Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)** and **WFM Anita Grønnestad (1970)** started up with a Queen's Gambit Exchange line. White went for an ambitious set up with Nge2 followed by f2-f3, but failed to follow up with the consequent e4. Following this black efficiently countered with 18... c5!?, and after 19.dxc5 Bxc5 got promising pressure against the backward white pawn at e3. White succeeded to bolster his position with a knight on the key d4 square and later was slightly better. As the queens were exchanged after 34 moves, white's c-file possession gave him pressure under mutual time trouble. Grønnestad became too eager to exchange the remaining queenside pawns. Having two minutes left for move 40, she still could have forced a probably drawn endgame with rook, knight and four kingside pawns against rook, knight and three kingside pawns if simply taking back the white bishop with 40... Nxd7. Instead the too tricky 40... b2? soon gave white a decisive advantage, as black on the final bill had to pay one rook, one bishop, one knight and two pawns for the queen.



**Fiskaaen vs Grønnestad**

# Open Group

The fighting spirit was even more remarkable in the second round of the Open group today, as all the top 13 boards after five intensive hours had got a winner. Top rated **FM Joachim Solberg (2167)** had a tense three-hour working session before mating in the queen and knight endgame as white against 16 year old **Philip Helland (1710)**. Solberg however was better almost all of the time on the board – and in the end he was a full hour ahead on the clock.

The Swedish main challenger Mikael Aroven (1997) however also looks confident so far, and today he as black instructively punished too lose pawn sacrifices from his young opponent **Gard Rye Høyforslett (1735)**.



**Høyforslett vs Aroven**

Third board was a highly entertaining attacking battle and junior duel with a surprising outcome, as 15 year old

**Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (1704)** after 40 moves captured the black king of fourth rated **Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (1893)** at g2 (!).

Fourth board also was a shaky attacking battle, in which 62 year old **Karim Ali (1696)** during mutual time pressure efficiently doubled his rooks in an open g-file, turning a lost position into a winning one against 33 years younger **Sigurd Kittilsen (1864)**.



**Ali vs Kittilsen**

A few more games were won by the lower rated players, although the Open surprisingly had no real sensations today. 12 players following this are sharing the lead at 2/2. Only four draws were registered among 27 games.

**Photos by Tom Eriksen**