

FAGERNES INTERNATIONAL AUTUMN 2022

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

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GM Group

The third round in this GM group became somewhat more peaceful than the second, but still a remarkable 11 out of top 15 boards got a winner. The very young Norwegian IM Elham Abdulrauf won confidently within three hours as black against even younger FM Semen Mitusov today, and so became the first player to reach 3/3. Abdulrauf was later joined by GM S. L. Narayanan and GM Abhimanyu Puranik, as both succeeded in winning five-hour endgames with an extra pawn. On second board GM Krishnan Sasikiran in the long end had to accept a draw as white against the young Norwegian IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen. The strong team of GMs from India still had another very good round as first rated GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu and fourth rated GM Sethuraman P. Sethuraman also won their games.

As the third board meeting between IM Kirk Ghazarian and GM Mads Andersen was a 20-minute draw, while recently arrived Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal won within two hours as black, we at the end of day three had Narayanan, Puranik and Abdulrauf sharing the lead at 3/3, half a point ahead of Praggnanandhaa, Sethuraman, Sasikiran, Andersen, Urkedal, Ghazarian and Kaasen. The favourites had another very good round as the GMs made 8.5 out of 10 possible points, while the top 18 games with a winner were all won by the highest rated player on the board!

The first board duel between **IM/WGM Vaishali Rameshbabu (2451)** and **GM S. L. Narayanan (2663)** started up as a positional Rossolimo Sicilian, reaching an isolated pawn position which after 15 moves was about balanced on the board as well as on the clock. After 23 moves all the minor pieces were exchanged, and the remaining position with queen, two rooks and six pawns on each side was balanced. Different pawn structures still gave some chances for both players, and Narayanan as black played on for a full point.



Rameshbabu vs Narayanan

He was rewarded as Vaishali at move 30 somewhat mysteriously gave up her pawn at a2. Although white had a plan to exchange off black's passed a-pawn afterwards, the remaining position with queen, rook and three pawns against queen, rook and four pawns was painful for her. As white had the more exposed king, black in turn made a strange decision when inviting a queen exchange at e6. White however became too eager to get off the queens as she helpfully exchanged them at e6 instead of playing 38.Rf6! – forcing black to exchange queens at d6 with a much more active position for the white rook. After the game continuation Narayanan got the version he hoped for. Soon winning a second pawn he had few problems demonstrating the win despite the reduced material.



Sasikiran vs Kaasen

GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2636) versus **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2445)** was a Grünfeld Exchange duel, reaching a typical position in which white had a center advantage and black a two against one majority on the queenside. Computers still gave white as slightly better after 18 moves. After exchanging one set of knights and both sets of rooks, black still had a sound position and a lot of time left to handle it. Sasikiran played hard for a win, giving his opponent a pair of bishops to establish a passed pawn at d5. Ahead on the clock, Kaasen however defended very well, exchanging one of his bishops to reach an endgame with queen and opposite-coloured bishops – and eliminate the d5 pawn. Black for some moves was a pawn up, but still without winning chances as he had a passive bishop pinned at e8 and had to watch out for dangers in the diagonal a1–h8. Sasikiran after getting 40 minutes more from move 41 immediately started to spend them, and after 44 minutes was down at eight minutes on the clock. Kaasen at that stage had returned his extra pawn at f6 to open air for his king. As Sasikiran ran out of time he decided to exchange off the queens – forcing a dead drawn bishop endgame with one pawn on each side. 20 year old Kaasen made his first GM-norm in the Norwegian Championships three months ago, and following this draw he at 2.5/3 has a promising start on his search for the second norm now.



Ghazarian vs Andersen

IM Kirk Ghazarian (2446) versus **GM Mads Andersen (2604)** finished with a draw within 20 minutes. It still lasted for 21 moves on the board, and the final position true enough was a drawish endgame with two rooks, one bishop and five pawns on each side. Both players might have been too well prepared for this Queen's Gambit Accepted. White sacrificed a pawn at e4, black gave it back at g7, and white spent a few minutes while black in the end had five minutes more on the clock than he had before move 1. With 2/2 as the starting point, white was satisfied drawing a 2600-GM while black was

satisfied with a relaxing black draw before the double round.



Puranik vs Arkell

GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2603) as white in a French against **GM Keith Arkell (2413)** went for the sharp 3.Nc3, but black chickened out with the modest 3... dxe4. White first had some more space, and then got the pair of bishops after black exchanged his light-squared bishop at f3. Arkell again played fast and had more than one hour left on the clock after 20 moves. On the board white's pair of bishops in an open position however gave him a distinct plus and the much easier position to play. White increased the pressure due to a bayonet a4-a5-a6 attack, scattering the black queenside pawns.

Puranik, after forcing a queen exchange at c6, surprised some spectators by allowing one of his bishops to be exchanged. This probably still was a good practical decision, as white due to his superior pawn structure and more active king was close to winning with rook, bishop and five pawns against rook, knight and five pawns.

Still an endgame legend, Arkell defended very well even with a pawn less, and for sure would have succeeded to scrape a draw against an opponent below Puranik's high level. White kept up his play very well until he after 60 moves had reached an endgame with rook, bishop and three pawns against rook, knight and two pawns – winning as white had two connected passed pawns on the queenside. With both players having only a few minutes left on the clock, the natural 65.c6? however was a mistake which made it possible for black to bring the king back in defence at d6.

Arkell however in turn lost a difficult defence line when he first missed a forced draw with 67... Ng4+! and then went for 68... Rg1? – after which white could sacrifice his bishop to promote the c-pawn.

61 year old Keith Arkell had requested a walk over draw for round 4 before this long game, but after losing it was eager to make sure his request was registered. 22 year Puranik on the other hand was all the more eager to play next round at Fagernes, after starting up with three wins.



Mitusov vs Abdulrauf

The teenager duel between Oslo players **FM Semen Mitusov (2415)** and **IM Elham Abdulrauf (2495)** started up with a Four Knights opening. Following many early exchanges the players after 15 moves had reached a position with two rooks, one bishop, one knight and six pawns against two rooks, two bishops and six pawns. Black came some 45 minutes ahead on the clock and had the pair of bishops, but his disrupted kingside pawn structure was a drawback. White temporarily gave up a pawn to exchange one of the bishops, but had an uphill struggle with a pawn less in

the rook and minor pieces endgame. Although exchanging one set of rooks was wrong, white reportedly still had the draw within reach in the rook endgame with three against four pawns. The defence plan however was far from obvious. As Mitusov made a mistake in the very important first move of the rook endgame, Abdulrauf could soon advance his pawn to a3 and demonstrate the instructive winning plan – which by the way was to open the seventh rank for his rook by sacrificing a pawn at e3. 17 year old Abdulrauf has won eight Elo points so far this tournament, but lost five in Sweden last week, hence he is still «only» at 2498 ... Still he is close to reaching 2500, and has had a great start on the search for his first GM-norm.



Pragganandhaa vs Kvaløy

GM Pragganandhaa Rameshbabu (2687) as white in a Nimzo-Indian against **FM Aksel Bø Kvaløy (2278)** entered the sharp Sämisch line with 4.a3!?. White happily accepted playing with a double c-pawn to get the pair of bishops. The position slowed down somewhat as white got the chance to repair his pawn structure by exchanging one of the c-pawns, while black by playing Ba6 and Bxd3 got the chance to exchange one of the bishops. White still had

some initiative and got a notable center advantage after f3 followed by e4. Black however got the help needed to get some counterplay with a tactical Ne5 followed by Nc4 just before move 20. The game took a sensational turn as 14 year old Kvaløy, not showing any respect for his opponent, following a not well-timed 24.a4? took over the initiative with h5–h4 – attacking white’s knight on g3. Paradoxically, the consequent 25.--- hxg3? was a mistake, as black first should have saved his own vital knight at c4. Pragg came up with a creative plan to exchange queens. Suddenly white following this was clearly better with two rooks, bishop and four pawns against two rooks, knight and four pawns. Kvaløy still was in the ring until he strangely gave up his pawn at a7 in move 31. Although white later was a pawn up with two connected passed pawns on the queenside, black due to his active pieces and white’s somewhat loose king still had some practical chances.

During mutual time pressure Pragg however made the better calculations, and neatly decided the game with an elegant tactical 36.Rxf6!. Pragg at 2.5/3 is back on track following his disappointing first round draw, but Kvaløy still gave the world star a hard fight today. Although losing always is a set back, especially when you are 14, meeting an opponent close to 2700 definitely helps a lot on the Elo average when you are playing for an IM norm.



Ingebretsen vs Sethuraman

FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2363) as white against **GM Sethuraman P. Sethuraman (2645)** was a complex Classical King's Indian duel. White established a space advantage on the queenside with d5, while black played hard for counterplay on the kingside with 11... f5.

12.g3 trapped black's knight at f4, but Sethuraman of course had a creative plan – allowing his knight to be taken at e6, to get in the f4-advance and capture black's bishop at e3. Black and his pair of bishops soon took over the initiative. White understandably castled long to go for a kingside

attack, but it soon turned out that black's king at g8 was much safer than white's king at c1. As the position later opened, black made the better calculations and completed his attack with a nice bishop sacrifice at move 33.



Stokke vs Urkedal

The Norwegian duel between **IM Kjetil Stokke (2307)** and **GM Frode Urkedal (2523)** was some kind of final for the late arriving players, as these were the winners from the postponed games last night.

The start was a Queen's Gambit, gravitating towards a Slav Exchange position as black took back with the c-pawn after 9.cxd5. Black was fine after placing his rook in the c-file and parking a knight on the strong c4-square, and came much better as white allowed the knights to be exchanged at e5. Unwilling afterwards to give up his loose pawn at e5, white snatched a pawn himself

at a7. This however turned out be a blunder, as white to save the queen had to sacrifice an exchange at c6. The rest was a walk in the park from a black point of view, as he was material up with the safer king and an ongoing attack. 0–1 came already after two hours – due to a violent mate with 29... Qh1#.



Kulaots vs Cherniaiev

GM Kaido Kulaots (2515) versus **Tykhon Cherniaiev (2239)** saw a Ruy Lopez Exchange line, leading to a typical position in which white had the better pawn structure and black the pair of bishops. Chances were about balanced on the board as well as the clock after 15 moves. White appeared better as he established a passed pawn at e6, but black snatched a pawn at f5 with a disturbing pressure against the white kingside. Forcing black to sacrifice a bishop at g4 later might have been correct, but if so white had to cover up his king with 23.Nh2! instead of 23.Bc3?. Although white had a

knight for three pawns and a passed pawn at e7, he afterwards was happy to see black repeating checks between h5 and g4 – as black now had the better chances to play on for a win.

12 year old Ukrainian refugee Tykhon Cherniaiev has been playing very well so far in his first Norwegian tournament, and of course can be very proud to draw two GMs with the black pieces.



Demchenko vs Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch

GM Anton Demchenko (2645) and **FM Andre Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch (2329)** started up with a Sicilian Rosselimo line, although this too resulted in a middle game in which white had the better pawn structure and black a pair of bishops. The bishops in a short term perspective did not give much here, as all 16 pawns were still on the board. White following this came slightly better. Demchenko increased the kingside pressure by a double-edged g4–g5 advance. 18 year old Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch hung on and balanced the chances as he got the chance to exchange one of the strong

white knights. White's remaining knight at e4 however was very strong, and following this white had the easier position to play with queen, rook, knight and six pawns against queen, rook, bishop and six pawns. Running short of time in a demanding position, Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch was unable to stop the white pieces from intervening on the kingside before 40 moves.

Black still fought on very well, giving up a pawn to reach an airy queen and minor piece endgame. The position appeared messy as white's passed b-pawn was running just ahead of black's passed a-pawn. Demchenko still was ahead on the clock and probably had it all under control on the board, completing his attack against the black king after 57 moves. This game was tense to the bitter end, as white in the final position had a passed pawn on b7, while black had a passed pawn at a2.

IM Linus Johansson (2461) versus **Shazil Shehzad (2224)** was another typical Grünfeld Exchange position, in which white had the center and black a two versus one pawn majority on the queenside. Circumstances here favoured white, as black was not able to exchange any more pieces in between move 5 and move 18. White at move 18 was happy to exchange off the queens, leaving a rooks and minor pieces endgame in which white's center and pair of bishops gave him a safe and sound advantage – since black's queenside pawn majority was paralyzed at a7 and b6.

As black proved able to exchange all the rooks and activate his remaining pieces, the double minor piece endgame later was borderline between a win for white and a draw. White for a long time made no progress, but after 70 moves and five hours he finally succeeded in opening the kingside by a well-timed f5-break. The IM after 85 moves was reported winning, as the talented junior had a hard time saving his key defence pawn at h7. After 90 moves the computer programs as well as human spectators still had problems concluding about the final borderline endgame with bishop and three pawns against knight and three pawns. Black needed «only» to trade his two last queenside pawns for the white a-pawn to reach a kingside fortress draw. Then in the end he needed only to sacrifice his knight for the white a-pawn to reach another kingside fortress draw. Reportedly black for a moment around move 105–106 had the draw within reach, defending with knight and pawn against bishop and two pawns. As black short of time missed that chance, white's a-pawn finally was ready to promote at move 111! This was the longest game of this tournament so far.



Rout vs Unneland

IM/WGM Padmini Rout (2390) as white against **FM Mathias Unneland (2185)** meanwhile went for a rather slow English fianchetto, leading to some kind of Benoni in advance. Black for some moves appeared better as he had both a pair of bishops and a center advantage, but chances were about balanced after white succeeded in exchanging black's

dark-squared bishop for a knight at b6 in move 22. White won a pawn as black overlooked a tactical 24.Nxe5!, but some tactical exchanges later she still had a hard time winning with queen, rook and five pawns against queen, rook and four pawns. White still was a pawn up in the queen endgame just before 40 moves, but without any winning chances as black's queen was much too active.



Grave vs Nielsen

Jacob Templen Grave (2221) versus **FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2384)** was a rather open Catalan opening in which black played Bb4+, exchanged the bishop for a knight at d2 and then tried to hang on his extra pawn at c4. White's aggressive plan with g4–g5 gave no real kingside attack, but black returned the pawn at e5, after which white due to his pair of bishops was fine if not slightly better. 16.b4? however was much too helpful, offering black all the help needed to establish a three versus one pawn majority on the queenside and a passed pawn at c4. Nielsen used all his

chances later on, and after 20 moves had a won position due to his octopus knight at d3 combined with two connected passed pawns at the queenside. White's decision to sacrifice an exchange at d5 to get some counterplay against the black king later was creative, but still insufficient. Black could (and did) close off the diagonals for white's bishop and then march on to victory with his queenside pawns.



Carlsson vs Westrum

Schoolmates and roommates **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2379)** and **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2156)** probably tried to confuse each other and made a highly original start with 1.g3 c5 2.Bg2 g6 3.c3 Qa5?!. White spent nearly one hour and black well above one hour for the first 10 moves. White obviously made the better use of all these minutes as black had an offside queen at a6 and lagged some three tempos behind in development. Carlsson again introduced himself as a gifted attacking player, sacrificing a piece at d4 to open lines against the black king, and won decisive material after only 18 moves.



Thavanandiran vs Østensen

IM Shyam Thavanandiran (2353) versus **Nicolai Østensen (2136)** was a Four Knights Opening in which black first appeared fine. White however had the much better plan after exchanging the dark-squared bishops, and due to his space advantage and better pieces he had a strong grip after 20 moves. Instead of just sinking, black creatively tried to get counterplay against the white king by sacrificing a knight. Thavanandiran spent a lot of time during the next two hours, but kept control on the board. After the first time control he was a rook up in the queen and rook endgame, and had no problems to escape the remaining cramp checks.



Al-Tarboush vs Sarkar

FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2161) as white against **IM Justin Sarkar (2350)** entered a long, closed and rather dry Ruy Lopez duel, leading to an approximately balanced position in which the first exchange of a piece came at move 20. 21.Rfa1?! might have been careless from a white point of view, as black could exchange his knight for a bishop at a4 and then place a strong new knight on the vacant c5 square. White creatively sacrificed an exchange for a pawn to get rid of the knight, and following inaccurate play from black got about enough compensation. Al-Tarboush later activated

his queenside pawns and appeared close to winning as he made a tactical 41.c5!.

Ten moves later on, white was totally winning, having established passed pawns at d6 and c7 while safely blocking black's passed a-pawn at a4. As black was about to run out of both time and moves, white however made a strange decision when exchanging one of his strong knights for a rather lame bishop at d7. Sarkar although short of time succeeded in finding the best moves later on, and the tide turned against white as he lost both his passed pawns without winning the black a-pawn.

Sarkar with very few minutes left on the clock in turn was inaccurate with two rooks and three pawns against rook, knight and four pawns. As black accepted to exchange his passed a-pawn, white after 70 moves was close to a kingside fortress with knight and three pawns against rook and two pawns. White's scattered pawns, with two f-pawns and one h-pawn, however still gave black some practical chances. In the sixth hour, just before 100 moves, stubborn Sarkar with two minutes left on the clock managed first to win one of the white f-pawns and then to force a won pawn endgame.



Lang-Nilsen vs Fiskaaen

The young Norwegian chess lions **Tobias Lang-Nilsen (2280)** and **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)** bravely entered a complex Sicilian Najdorf line, which became even more double-edged as white castled long while black left his king at e8. Both players spent a lot of time after the opening preparation, but white came better following an aggressive g4–g5–g6 advance. Although the material after 21 moves still was in balance, white then had a won position as his king on b1 was so much safer than the black king at f7. Fiskaaen spent much time and came up with some creative

ideas for counterplay on the queenside. Not accidentally the tactics still worked out in favour of Lang-Nilsen just before 40 moves.



Kistrup vs Holand

FM Nicolai Kistrup (2274) versus **Per Fredrik Holand (2024)** saw a Semi-Slav opening in which white played a slow set up with 5.b3, provoking black to play 5...c5?! (wasting a tempo as the pawn was already at c6). The following position with hanging black pawns at c5 and d5 was slightly better for white from the start. It turned into a clear advantage as white was allowed to play 15.Bxf6! followed by 16.Qh5 – winning a pawn due to a double attack on h7 and d5. What long term compensation the pair of bishops could have given black disappeared as white instructively exchanged off the

light-squared bishops. Kistrup in an inspired mood smashed through with a rather violent attack against the black kingside before 30 moves, and today had several minutes left on the clock when he finished the game.



Frederic vs Austad

Clément Frederic (2234) as white against **Eirik Strøm Austad (1985)** started up with an original and ambitious 1.f4. From the Bird opening the game reached some kind of Dutch Leningrad in Advance, in which black first got a promising initiative following a pawn sacrifice at b5. Sacrificing another pawn with 17.--- d3? however was a serious misunderstanding. True enough black after 18.cxd3 Bc5 followed by Bxf2+ won an exchange, but two pawns plus a pair of bishops gave

white the much better position afterwards. Black wisely avoided exchanging queens, and got some counterplay as white spent several moves exchanging his strong knight at c4 for a not so strong bishop at b7. White still had the much easier position to play with two bishops and two pawns for rook and knight. Remarkably that combination of pieces, although about in balance from a material point of view, almost never seems to favour the rook and knight. Anyway, Austad proved unable to defend a very difficult position. White's position soon became winning as he picked up a pawn at a5 – establishing two passed queenside pawns. Black at move 41 suggested a queen exchange, but this was perfectly acceptable for white as his pawn armada supported by the bishops was overwhelming in the endgame.



Schouten vs Rasmussen

Mathias Lind Schouten (2128) versus **GM Allan Stig Rasmussen (2531)** started up like a Taimanov Sicilian, but as white later played c4 it transposed into a Maroczy set up in which black was perfectly fine from the opening. Both players spent much time in the early middle game.

17.--- Bd4?! although positionally natural was dubious, as white got a tactical possibility to play 18.e5! Bxe5 19.Bxc5 with a clear advantage. Rasmussen and his king at e7 later was in trouble. The position still was double-edged as white had little time on the clock to handle a demanding position

in which black's pair of bishops gave him some potential. 22.Ne4! according to the computers could have given white a won position, although 22.— Ba3 23.Qg4 was messy for a human eye. 22.Nd7?? anyway asked for too much as black could play 22.--- Qxc6! 23.Nxb8 Bxb8 and get two bishops for a rook. The GM now turned on the switch, and as Schouten ran out of time he soon found himself a bishop down in the rooks and bishop endgame.

Emerik Våpenstad Roulet-Dubonnet (2343) white against **Shadi Sian (2108)** was an unlucky pairing for two roommates and teammates from the Hell chess club in the middle of Norway. The game still became highly entertaining, following an apparently safe Queen's Gambit Exchange line.

As white delayed his kingside development, black sacrificed a pawn at c5 to open the center with a d4 break. White succeeded in castling short by giving back the pawn, leaving a balanced and very open position in which the c-, d- and e-pawns all had left. These positions without any center pawns are known to be drawish, but also to be very tactical. That proved relevant for this game as black played inaccurately and ran into tactical dangers in the c-file.

White very strangely avoided a very straightforward exchange winning fork with 21.Ne5 (attacking the queen at c6 and the rook at d7). Following this the remaining position with queen, rook, knight and five pawns on each side was close to equal after 25 moves. The position later circled around black's isolated pawn at e6. White could have taken the pawn with a clear advantage just before 40 moves, but missing that chance he still kept a clear advantage as the pawn remained a weakness after the time control. Although both players made a few mistakes in an airy position, white after winning the pawn at e6 had a decisive attack and won by a heavyweight eight rank intervention after 59 moves.



Bjerke vs Welling

Norwegian **FM Richard Bjerke (2096)** and Dutch **IM Gerard Welling (2272)** had a true veteran duel today, as white was aged 64 and black 63. The game started up with a positional Caro-Kann line, in which white after exchanging two pairs of minor pieces had a slight space advantage. 17.Ne5? however was a mistake, as black was happy to

exchange the knight and soon afterwards started a promising minority attack on the queenside. After 28 moves the position with queen, rook, bishop and five pawns against queen, rook, knight and five pawns somehow should be a draw. White still was under heavy pressure, as he had weak pawns to defend both as b3 and e5. Welling instructively intervened with his heavy pieces on the seventh rank, then advanced his passed d-pawn, winning safely as the pawn had reached d2 and the rook e1 after 47 moves.



Melaa vs Kreken

The Norwegian junior duel between **Sondre Melaa (2223)** and **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2107)** started up with a London system, in which all the bishops disappeared within the first 11 moves. Unwilling to accept a very equal position, white instead went astray with an overambitious 13.e5?!. Black cashed in a pawn at c3 and later defended fairly well on the kingside. White castled long to play with two rooks in the half-open h-file. As black could defend by a simple 18... h6, white's king at c1 soon was the more airy one. With both players short of time, black at move 22 left a

repetition of checks to snatch a second pawn at g3 with his queen. This turned out to be a good decision, and black within a few moves later on was clearly winning with two extra pawns in the double rook endgame.



Ytrestøyl vs Prilleltensky

Sindre Lyngsaunet Ytrestøyl (2045) versus **Matan Prilleltensky (2222)** was a Sicilian Alapin duel in which white first established a space advantage with e5. Black however was perfectly fine after exchanging the e5 pawn plus two sets of minor pieces. As his bishop at d6 was better than white bishop at b2, black later was slightly better. Although materially balanced, white's position with queen, rook, knight and four pawns on each side was difficult due to his inferior pawn structure and weak first rank. With both players short of time for move 40, black with his queen and rook on the eight

rank appeared close to winning. Black however became too helpful when exchanging off the knights, as it turned out that white's king without the knights was remarkably safe at h3.

Forcing an exchange of the black queen was natural from a white point of view, but still not without risks as his king at h3 was permanently locked out in the rook endgame. Objectively speaking, the remaining rook endgame with four kingside pawns on each side was a draw. White however still had some tough decisions to make with a few minutes on the clock in the fifth hour.

Allowing black to play 46... g4+! turned out to be a decisive mistake, as the white king stuck at h4 was in danger of getting mated by Rh8. White had to sacrifice a pawn to save his king. As the white king remained in an offside position, the last rook endgame was a trivial win for black and his passed d-pawn.



Perkampus vs Verbin

The juniors **Laurin Perkampus (2123)** and **Valentina Verbin (2075)** meanwhile discussed a Classical Nimzo-Indian in which black became too passive. Perkampus with German efficiency directed his pair of bishops towards the black king and soon had a dangerous attack. Black's position improved somewhat as she was able to exchange off white's light-squared bishop. White however still had kingside pressure and 25... Rc6? turned out to be a careless blunder as white could play 26.fxe5 with the highly unpleasant threat of 27.Bh6+. Verbin tried to give up a bishop instead of an

exchange, but losing more material without finding any more counterplay she stopped the clock after 32 moves.



Amundsen vs Liabøtrø

17 year old **Ask Amundsen (1869)** and 63 year old **FM Pål-Ole Liabøtrø (2145)** tested out a rare and provocative Alekhine's opening, in which play first circled around white's double-edged pawn at e5. Allowing a thematic pseudo-sacrifice with 11.Bxf7!? reportedly was fine from a black point of view. As black played inaccurately afterwards, white however kept a dangerous attack after winning back the bishop at f5. Black felt forced to give up a pawn to exchange queens, but white soon won a second pawn and had few problems winning the remaining rook and knight

endgame. Rated as number 60 among the 60 players in this very strong field, Amundsen has made a very promising start with 1.5/3 following this win.

Joel P. Ganta (2031) as white against **Dion Krivenko (2107)** chose a rare Sicilian line with 3.Bc4 and 4.h3. Black's decision to play Na5 followed by Nxc4 in the opening probably was not too good, as white's control on the d5-square and pressure against the backward d6-pawn later counted for more than black's pair of bishops. Exchanging the white pawn at c4 for the black pawn at h6 later increased white's advantage, as black later had a hard time defending his weakened kingside.

Black was able to exchange off the dangers of a mating attack, but due to his backward pawn at d6 and light-square problems he later had a positional nightmare to defend with queen, two rooks, bishop and seven pawns against queen, two rooks, knight and seven pawns.

White moved a bit back and forth, but still kept up the pressure and before move 40 made a decisive breakthrough in the b-file. The game lasted only a few moves after the time control, as white's two rooks on the seventh rank then gave him a decisive attack.



Ganta vs Krivenko



Strand vs Myagmarsuren

Vetle Bjørge Strand (2053) versus **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1952)** was a Slav Exchange opening in which black played much too fast and carelessly in the opening – allowing white to win a sound pawn by playing 7.Qb3 followed by Ne5 and Qxd5. 12 year old Myagmarsuren however fought on stubbornly following this disastrous start. He was rewarded as white after 24 moves gave up his strong light-squared bishop for a knight at c6, without finding any of the best

continuations on the next move. Black's position improved a lot as he could exchange off the rooks. Despite his extra pawn, white later had difficulties winning the double minor piece endgame due to black's barking bishops. Myagmarsuren later efficiently used his chance to exchange the dark-squared bishop for white's knight, leaving an opposed coloured bishop endgame in which white's extra pawn was completely worthless.



Stray vs Hausken

52 year old **Gunnar Stray (2015)** as white against 19 year old **Andreas Skrede Hausken (2050)** went for one of his Queen's Pawn openings. First this did not give white much more than a well-known position, as black after exchanging the c- and- pawns was close to equal. The game suddenly lightened up with the thematic pseudo-sacrifice 14.Nd5!? – especially as white after 14.--- Bxd5 creatively replied 15.Ng5 with threats against black's bishop at d5 and knight at h5. Black reportedly was fine after 15.--- Bc6 16.Qxh5, but then 16.--- Nf6?? was a decisive blunder as white could play

17.Nxe6! > Nxh5 18.Nxc7+ and 19.Nxa8. Stray after wasting his chances in the first two rounds efficiently used this one, and black after some desperate tactical cramps resigned three moves later on.

WFM Anita Grønnestad (1970) as white against **Heine N. Johannessen (2033)** went for a Sicilian Wing Gambit with 1.e4 c5 2.b4 cxb4 3.a3. Black took the pawn and came a fairly sound pawn up from the opening, although white later had reasonable compensation after she was allowed a disturbing Nb6–Nd5 maneuver. As white a pawn down was about to run out of steam on the kingside,



Grønnestad vs Johannessen

20.Ng6? was consequent. Still it was a very dubious piece sacrifice with no obvious continuation. 16 year old Heine Johannessen again spent a lot of time. This time he however played very well for the rest of the game – bolting his kingside and completing the win with a decisive counterattack during mutual time pressure.

Open Group

The Open also had another hard-fought round, as board nine today was the first one registered with a draw. Top rated **FM Joachim Solberg (2167)** as black in a messy Sicilian battle against 16 year old **Olai Dyrhaug Eriksen (1767)** from the start ran well ahead on the clock, but lagged behind on the board, as white after exchanging off all the knights held a very dangerous initiative for some moves.



Eriksen vs Solberg

Solberg somehow succeeded in retreating his queen and consolidate the position, and later efficiently used his chances as Eriksen following an unclear exchange sacrifice ran short of time and lost material.



Aroven vs Golsta

Second board duel between Swedish **Mikael Aroven (1997)** and Latvian **Ramona Golsta (1766)** also was an exciting game. Aroven still had a strong initiative almost all the way, and after four hours had a safe win in the rook and minor piece endgame.

Third board meeting between **Theo N. Johannessen (1756)** and **Lars Tormod Haugen (1861)** was a tight five-hour battle, finally decided in favour of black as he outplayed his opponent from a drawish rook endgame.

Fourth board instead was an exciting junior duel between **Vinjar Hammari (1853)** and **Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (1704)**, in which white wasted promising chances in the early middle game, while black efficiently used his chances for a counterattack during mutual time pressure before 40 moves.

Something similar happened in the fifth board game between 18 year old **Aleksander Stolp (1823)** and 62 year old **Karim Ali (1696)**: White had pressure most of the game, but black used his chance as his opponent short of time for 40 moves sacrificed a knight and failed to find the critical continuation afterwards.

The sixth board junior duel between **Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (1785)** and **Simen Nikolai Storlid (1666)** on the other hand was more or less decided from the opening, as white hesitated too long getting his king out of the center – running into tactics which won two pawns with an overwhelming position for black. 18 year old Storlid later nearly made the game exciting by running seriously short of time for 40 moves, but the rook endgame with two connected passed pawns then was an easy win for him.



Evenshaug vs Storlid

Following this we remarkably have six players sharing the lead with a perfect score of 3/3. These six players are rated 1, 2, 7, 19, 20 and 23 in the tournament. Still the Open has had remarkably few really surprising game results on the top boards so far.

The middle boards had some surprising outcomes today: **Torgeir Bø (1574)** won following a nice tactical counterattack as black against **Sigurd Kittilsen (1864)**, while **Even Hetland (1432)** as black against **Jonas Bernstein (1801)** suddenly went from in a squeeze to cheese as his opponent blundered.

Bø and Hetland following this is in the big crowd at 2.0/3, while the only player at 2.5/3 remarkably is fifth rated **Max Moe Pedersen (1881)** – today winning in 23 moves by hard tactics as black against **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1667)**.

Third rated veteran **Roaul Abrahamsson (1904)** unfortunately had to take a walk over loss today, and now at 1.0/3 he has a long way up to the top boards when returning tomorrow.

Fourth rated **Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (1893)** is a highly capable but still somewhat uneven 14 year old, and has made a modest start with 1.5/3 after he today barely saved a draw as white against **Thobias Gotaas Hansen (1606)**.

Photos by Tom Eriksen