

# FAGERNES INTERNATIONAL AUTUMN 2022

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 4



### GM Group

The top boards in the first half of the double round saw some kind of reaction after the very hard-fought rounds 2 and 3. First board meeting between GM S. L. Narayanan and GM Abhimanyu Puranik was a short and rather safe draw, and so was the second board meeting between IM Elham Abdulrauf and GM Krishnan Sasikiran. Fourth board duel between GM Sethuraman Sethuraman and IM Kirk Ghazarian also shared the point, but this came after five and a half hours – and after both players missed winning chances.

Top rated GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu steamed up after winning with a nice attack as black against IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen, and so did Danish GM Mads Andersen as he after 114 moves succeeded in squeezing a six and a half hours marathon struggle against Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal.

Following this the tournament had no player at 4/4, but instead Praggnananda, Narayanan, Puranik, Abdulrauf and Andersen shared the lead at 3.5, ahead of seven players at 3.0. It is a bit too early to speculate about title norm chances, but obviously Ghazarian has had a promising start and Abdulrauf an even more promising start on their hunt for the first GM-norm.

Still there are somehow surprisingly few surprising wins in this tournament, as the higher rated player won at all the first eleven boards that had a winner. Notably all the four women players in the GM groups won their games this round, and 21 year old IM Vaishali Rameshbabu at 3.0/4 is still in the run for her final GM norm.

The first board meeting between **GM S. L. Narayanan (2663)** and **GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2603)**, slightly disappointingly, was a one hour draw. Still it was a sound game of chess, finishing after 19 moves in a balanced endgame with two rooks, one bishop and six pawns on each side.

The start was an English fianchetto, reaching an isolated queen's pawn position which first appeared slightly better for white. White's structural advantage was increased as black took back with his a-pawn when white exchanged off his knight for a bishop at b6, leaving black with an isolated pawn at d5 plus two isolated b-pawns. Black however had active pieces and moved them around very fast. White although searching found nothing better than exchanging off the queens at d4 – repairing black's structure and leaving a balanced rooks and bishop endgame. Puranik appeared to be very well prepared as he spent only nine minutes for the whole game – and then he spent seven of them considering whether to accept a draw in the final position. Both players at 3.5/4 of course can be very satisfied with their start.



**Narayanan vs Puranik**

On second board **IM Elham Abdulrauf (2495)** and **GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2636)** made a rather original start with 1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 d5. White got his fianchetto bishop while black got a center advantage, leaving a fairly balanced position on the board and clock after 10 moves. Black after exchanging two sets of minor pieces mobilized his knight for d4 and the heavy pieces for the d- and e-file with a slight initiative. Lagging behind on the clock and aware there was a second game



**Abdulrauf vs Sasikiran**

coming up for this afternoon, Sasikiran still offered a draw in a fairly balanced position after white at move 24 exchanged off the knights too at d4. Abdulrauf was happy to accept that, as he following this draw is ahead of schedule for a GM-norm and reached 2500 for the first time.

**IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2445)** as white against **GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu (2687)** went for a safe Sicilian line with 3.Bb5+, reaching a balanced and closed position as white played c4–d3– e4 while black played c5–d6–e5. Pragg remarkably soon succeeded in unbalancing and open the position. Still the white underdog after 26 moves was fine, if not even slightly better, due to his better pawn structure and knight at d5. After three sets of minor pieces were exchanged, white had an apparently promising pressure in the half open f-file. Black however soon demonstrated counterplay in the open c-file, intervening at c2 in move 29. White reportedly still would have been better if retreating his knight to e3, joining the defence forces. As Kaasen was about to run short of time he instead blundered with 30.Nb6?, allowing an instructive 30.--- Qg5! 31.g3 Qh5! 32.h4 Qe2 with a decisive attack. Kaasen with one second left on the clock blundered a mate at move 36, but then he was forced to lose about a ton of material anyway.



**Kaasen (2445) vs Pragganandhaa**

**GM Sethuraman P. Sethuraman (2645)** and **IM Kirk Ghazarian (2446)** started up with a positional and rather closed Italian duel, in which white was slightly ahead on the board and clock after the first hour. White got a pair of bishops and gradually built up a promising kingside attack around move 16-24. Black following this came under pressure on the board as well as on the clock. White however made a big mistake when he played a direct 25.f4?, without inserting 25.dxe5 fxe5, as black after 25... e4! succeeded in



**Sethuraman vs Ghazarian**

blocking the diagonals for white's bishops. Ghazarian following this soon reorganized his forces for a kingside counterattack. After opening the g- and f-file, he both before and after move 40 had a dangerous attack running against white's king at e2. Sethuraman and his bishops fought on well in the fifth hour, but black was a sound pawn up with an ongoing attack. Although black failed to find the best attacking continuations, the endgame with queen, knight and five pawns against queen, bishop and four pawns after 51 moves for sure still was winning. Running short of time the IM however failed to find the accurate moves, and so after 60 moves the 2600-GM after all got around with his queen in time to force a perpetual check against the airy black king. 16 year old Ghazarian was a bit disappointed at himself for not winning this position, but considered the outcome fair enough as Sethuraman had the first winning attack.

The Scandinavian fifth board duel between Danish **GM Mads Andersen (2604)** and Norwegian GM **Frode Urkedal (2523)** started up with a Ruy Lopez Berlin line, in which white after black's 5... Nd6 played 6.a4 instead of exchanging the bishop at c6. Within a few moves white won back the pawn at e4. The pawn structure following this was symmetric, although white had a slight initiative and some 25 minutes more on the clock after 15 moves.

As white after exchanging three sets of minor pieces kept a pressure, black sacrificed a pawn to activate his pieces and get a passed a-pawn. This did not work out too well, as white's passed pawn at b6 after 32 moves gave him a decisive advantage. Andersen however made a mistake when he gave Urkedal the chance to sacrifice an exchange upon the b6-pawn.

The remaining position with queen, rook and three pawns against queen, bishop and four pawns in no way was an easy win for white. Andersen after 40 moves left a repetition of checks to play on for a win, and removed all danger of a loss as he later exchanged queens and picked up black's passed a-pawn. Urkedal still was laidback at the start of the sixth hour, as the remaining endgame with rook, h- and g-pawn versus dark-squared bishop, h- and g-pawn is known to be a theoretical draw. This endgame still is not trivial to defend with a few minutes left on the clock, not even for a GM.

Andersen around move 85 moves tested out the critical plan, placing his rook at g2 and pushing g4 to break the pawn symmetry.

The final rook endgame with rook and h-pawn versus bishop and g-pawn also was a draw, but Urkedal in the end just before six hours made a mistake while trying to exchange the final pawns, and ended up with bishop against rook and h-pawn – dead lost as black's bishop was dark-squared and not light-squared. The live transmission unfortunately cramped after 86 moves, in a still drawish position, but the players continued for some 30 minutes more and Andersen won on the board after 114 moves.



**Thavandiran vs Demchenko**

**IM Shiyam Thavandiran (2353)** and **GM Anton Demchenko (2645)** a few hours earlier on discussed a complex and Classical Sicilian position in which white castled long, while black kept his king awaiting at e8. As white exchanged his dark-squared bishop at f6 black had a pair of bishops, but an inferior pawn structure with two f-pawns and a backward pawn at d6. The position in short was positionally very complex. The GM obviously had the better preparation as he after 16 moves had more time than before the start of the

game, while white had spent about an hour. Black later also spent a lot of time, and although his pawns marched forward on the queenside, the outcome still was open after 23 moves.

As black tested the critical 24... b3!?, white probably was wrong to take twice at b3, opening the c-file for black's heavy pieces. Still white could have had fair chances if protecting the c1-square with 28.Qd2 or 28.Qd1, as material still was in balance and black's dark-squared bishop still was rather lame at e7. Instead 28.Re3?? was a decisive blunder, as black immediately could (and did) play a very straightforward 28... Qc1+ 29.Ka2 Rc2 with decisive threats.



**Sarkar vs Kulaots**

**IM Justin Sarkar (2350)** versus **GM Kaido Kulaots (2515)** started up with a Pirc opening in which no piece or pawn were exchanged for the first 10 moves, leaving white with a little more space. Both players later made sensible moves and sound exchanges, and consequently white stayed slightly better into a position with queen, two rooks and seven pawns on each side.

White made a try to play for a win as he after 30 moves sacrificed a pawn at c5 to establish a passed pawn at d6.

Unwilling to run any risks with the

passed pawn, Kulaots gave back two pawns to exchange off the queens – leaving a dead drawn position with three against two kingside pawns. Sarkar wisely offered a draw right away instead of playing one hour extra with rook, two g-pawns and f-pawn against rook, g- and f-pawn.



**Nilsen vs Johansson**

**Tobias Lang Nilsen (2280)** versus **IM Linus Johansson (2461)** saw a hard-fought Sicilian Sveshnikov duel, in which white played Be3 and at move 12 snatched a pawn at a7 with his knight. All the knights soon disappeared due to tactical exchanges, after which white had an extra pawn and black two aggressive pawns at e5 and f4. Black somewhat strangely exchanged the light-squared bishops, and following this white due to his extra pawn was better. The advanced pawns at e4 and f4 however again gave black some counterplay after the

remaining set of bishops also disappeared. Both players appeared fairly well satisfied as a draw was agreed by repetition of checks just before 40 moves.

**FM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2278)** and **IM/WGM Vaishali Rameshbabu (2451)** had another Classical Sicilian discussion. Two sets of minor pieces were exchanged early. Black after 16 moves was some 20 minutes ahead on the clock with a pair of bishops and an active position. Taking into account that white's knight was rather passive at a3, black had the better chances despite her inferior pawn structure with two f-pawns and a backward pawn at d6. Tension was high with a more open position in the fourth hour, as white tried to attack black's king at e8



**Kvaløy vs Vaishali**

while black tried to attack the white king at g1. Vaishali in a still complex position after 27 moves had only three minutes left on the clock in an apparently very messy position, but by then she actually had a dangerous attack and was about to win a piece. Kvaløy during mutual time trouble went for counterplay against the black king and after 35 moves made a trap for a perpetual check. With one minute left on the clock Vaishali found the only winning move with 35.--- Qc6!. The rest was easy and the black queen via g2 jumped in to proclaim mate at f2 in move 40.



**Kistrup vs Mitusov**

The junior duel between **FM Nicolai Kistrup (2274)** and **FM Semen Mitusov (2415)** started up as an ambitious open Catalan, turning tactical around move 7. Kistrup as usual spent close to one hour for the first ten moves, but kept an extra pawn with some pressure despite his inferior pawn structure. Mitusov however demonstrated a superior understanding of this position as he after exchanging three sets of minor pieces first got a lot of counterplay on the light squares and then won back the pawn at d6.

Kistrup once more had less than one minute left on the clock after 28 moves. By then was in double trouble on the board, as black had the safer king and the better pawn structure. White succeeded in exchanging the remaining rooks, but still not to save his king at h3. Mitusov fast and confidently demonstrated the attacking potential of a queen and knight, mating the black king at h4 with an elegant 38.--- Ng2#.

**FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2384)** versus **Clément Frederic (2234)** was a Dutch Leningrad duel, in which black's fianchetto bishop at g7 appeared very strong. The computers despite this and two c-pawns still gave white a clear advantage, as he established a space advantage with d5 and then challenged the black kingside pawn chain with 14.e4!?. White after opening the position redirected his knight to g6 with a winning attack. Although black was still only one pawn down, his remaining pieces were more or less in dire straits when Frederic resigned after 29 moves.



**Cherniaiev vs Carlsson**

**Tykhon Cherniaiev (2239)** and **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2379)** made a rather original start with 1.Nf3 f5 2.d3 Nc6 3.e4 e5, reaching some kind of reversed King's Gambit. The position strangely still became rather equal after black exchanged his bishop for a knight on c3 and white exchanged his bishop for a knight on c6. Both players

later had two c-pawns and the opposite-coloured bishops voted for a draw. Although white's knight at e5 and black's pawn at e4 offered both players some possibilities, the game was draw by a sensible repetition after 20 moves.

Following three turbulent games so far, **GM Allan Stig Rasmussen (2531)** as white against **Laurin Perkampus (2123)** made a modest start with 1.Nf3 and 2.e3. The game later transposed into a rare Semi-Slav opening, in which white played b3 and black b5. This b5-plan here had a bad timing, as white after the thematic 11.e4! got a sound space advantage and black had some worries about his c6-pawn. Perkampus spent almost 70 minutes for the first 12 moves, but suddenly got some chances as Rasmussen first allowed a freeing 17... Ne4 and then after 18.Qg4 Nxc3 sacrificed a bishop with 19.Bxh6? Nxe2+. Objectively speaking, white did not have enough compensation for the piece. The sacrifice still worked out very well from a practical point of view, as Perkampus short of time failed to find the best defensive moves. The bishop at h6 had its triumph as white at move 24 could sacrifice the bishop at g7 – and then an exchange more at h6. In the final position after 27 moves, black following this was a rook and bishop up, but still unable to save his king at h6 from white's remaining queen, knight and rook.



**Welling vs Rout**

**IM Gerard Welling (2272)** as white against the young chess lioness **IM/WGM Padmini Rout (2390)** started up with a slow Queen's Pawn opening (1.d4 2.Nf3 3.e3), but then accelerated on the queenside with b4 and c4. Black went for active counterplay with Ne4. After exchanging two sets of minor pieces she was fine on the board and some 40 minutes ahead on the clock. As black started a direct kingside attack with 20... Ng4!?, white still could have had approximately equal chances if just exchanging

off his knight at e5. Instead 21.f4? was much too weakening, and after taking the pawn en passant, black soon could intervene on c2 with a strong initiative. White avoided a direct mate by exchanging queens. As black won a pawn and kept a dangerous attack with her rook, bishop and knight, white stopped the clock with a few seconds left after 27 moves.



**Prilleltensky vs Ingebretsen**

**Matan Prilleltensky (2222)** as white against **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2363)** went for a patient Colle system, but suddenly got a strong initiative as black first exchanged his c-pawn at d4 and then a bishop for a knight at e5. White later had a strong pressure due to his e5-pawn and pair of bishops. Black escaped the first attacking wave by castling long, but still found himself in trouble after 28 moves, as white was about to open the queenside while his own king was perfectly safe at g1. Ingebretsen however

now was fully concentrated and fought on very well, establishing a passed pawn at c4 and a disturbing knight at d3. Perfectionist Prilleltensky again had only one minute left on the clock from move 26, and suddenly lost the thread with 34.Bg3? – parking his bishop in a passive position and offering black a lot of counterplay on the queenside. Black following this took over the initiative and soon started a counterattack against the white king. Prilleltensky succeeded in reaching move 40 without losing on time, but in the meantime instead lost this game convincingly on the board. Black was about to get a rook more in the rook endgame when white resigned after 44 moves.





**Kreken vs Roulet-Dubonnet**

The Norwegian junior duel between **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2107)** and **Emerik Våpenstad Roulet-Dubonnet (2343)** saw a Classical French defence, soon turning tactical after white castled long and black short. After some tactical minor piece exchanges, the position changed nature when the queens too were exchanged following 17.Qxd5. White now was a pawn up and had a strong pressure against black's isolated pawn at a7, while black's pair of bishops and pair of rooks gave him a lot of

compensation. As black demonstrated heavy pressure against the white pawn at c2, this dynamic two-hour game was drawn by a repetition of knight checks between f7 and h6 after 30 moves.

**FM Andre Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch (2329)** and **Ask Amundsen (1869)** had a very slow discussion about an English fianchetto line, as white spent more than 60 minutes and black more than 50 minutes for the first eleven moves. Black countered in the center with a d5-break and was equal if not better. 18.--- f5? however was too weakening, and white successfully regrouped his pieces with Ba1 and Nd4 – followed by a tactical Nxf5!. White later made some mistakes with rook and bishop versus rook and knight in the endgame, but still got a decisive advantage as he was a very sound pawn up with a four against two majority running on the kingside. Sacrificing the knight for a pawn at move 40 was pure desperation from black, but white due to his passed pawns at e5 and f6 anyway had an easy win at that stage.

**FM Mathias Unneland (2185)** arrived some 25 minutes delayed for the game against **IM Kjetil Stokke (2307)**, but still bravely entered a positionally complex King's Indian position against the IM. After both players castled short, Unneland following his late arrival lagged some 30-40 minutes behind on the clock. He still played rather fast and confident, and got a positional edge due to the d5-square and black's backward pawn at d6. 13.Qd2 might not objectively have been the best move, but it more or less forced black to play 13.--- Qh4, after which 14.g3 Bxg3 15.hxg3 Qxg3+ forced a draw which both players appeared fairly satisfied with. Stokke during his preparations was a bit surprised that so few strong players used this very sound variation, but then during the game realized that this was because lower rated white players could more or less force a draw.



**Shehzad vs Fiskaaen**

The teenager duel between **Shazil Shehzad (2224)** and **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)** was a Four Knights English opening, in which all the four knights however were exchanged within the first ten moves. The remaining position was very open and tactical, especially as white had not castled. Fiskaaen spent more than 80 minutes for the first 15 moves. The position true enough was complex, as black then had sacrificed his light-squared bishop at g4 to hit in at c3 with the dark-squared bishop. After 15.--- Bxa1, black had won an exchange for a pawn and white had his king in an awkward position at f1. White however had a pair of bishops and could win back the exchange on f8. As Shehzad used that opportunity, the remaining position with queen, rook, opposite-coloured bishops and five pawns on each side first was considered a likely draw. Black however still had practical problems as he was under pressure on the clock, and white had the more active pieces. White following this anyway was much better when black, trying to trick his opponent with the counterattack 26.--- Re8?, ended up to trick away his own bishop at a1. The last ten moves were not too exciting, as white after the queens were exchanged had a piece for a pawn with a big advantage on the clock.

**Per Fredrik Holand (2024)** versus **Jacob Templen Grave (2221)** was a Torre Attack opening, in which white first retreated his bishop to h4 and then exchanged it for a knight at f6 to disrupt black's kingside pawns. Black in turn greedily snatched a pawn at b2 with his queen, while still having both his bishops in the start position after 12 moves. White following this had a strong initiative after 12 moves, although the position remained very complex. After his move 13 white had spent close to 60 minutes on the clock, but black still lagged 15 minutes behind. As white lost the thread, black succeeded in castling long and stabilizing the position, after which his pair of bishops even gave him some chances for an advantage. Exchanging one of the bishops for a knight at e4 was a serious misunderstanding from black, about to run short of time before 30 moves. Later the opposite-coloured bishops favoured white, as black had the much more exposed king. White instructively hit open the queenside against black's king with a4–a5, and completed his attack before 40 moves.



**Johannessen vs Al-Tarboush**

**Heine N. Johannessen (2033)** and **FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2161)** meanwhile discussed a Slav opening position in which white had some space advantage after advancing in the center with e4–e5 and exchanging off the knights at d5. The position became very double-edged after black exchanged his light-squared bishop for a knight on f3, as white now had a pair of bishops and a g-file with a very bad pawn structure. Black took over the initiative with 22.--- e5 followed by 23.--- exd4, winning a pawn

and freeing the e5 square for his knight. Inviting a queen exchange was a strange decision from black, as he now after 27 moves had the more dangerous kingside attack. Turning down the invitation to the queen exchange on the other hand was even more strange from white, and so black could continue with a winning attack and an extra pawn. Both players short of time made some mistakes, and white for some moves was reported inside the ring again. Black however still had a passed d-pawn plus the more dangerous attack. In the end after 40 moves he could exchange it all down to a won pawn endgame.



**Westrum vs Stray**

**Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2156)** and **Gunnar Stray (2015)** was a rather unconventional Sicilian with 2.c4?!, in which white castled short while black left his king at e8 and started a pawn storm on the kingside. This apparently primitive approach worked out very well for black, as white came under pressure and spent some 85 minutes for the first 19 moves. After all the knights were exchanged, black snatched a pawn at b2 and came better despite some long term worries for his undeclared king. A draw was

agreed by repetition a few moves later on: Black still was a sound pawn up with a clear advantage, but true enough would have to run some risks if he wanted to win this game.



**Østensen vs Ganta**

**Nicolai Østensen (2136)** as white against **Joel P. Ganta (2031)** went for an unusual and rather slow Queen's Pawn fianchetto with Nf3–d4–g3–c3. Black first equalized by sound means, but then went astray with a very loose 10.--- g5? – sacrificing a pawn at e4 while weakening his own king at e8 more than the white king at g1. Even more strangely black afterwards exchanged off the queens, leaving white a pawn up with the better pieces and the better pawn structure.

The endgame with two rooks, one bishop and six pawns against two rooks, knight and five pawns following this was close to winning. Østensen however somehow cramped during the next two hours, while black gradually activated his pieces and took over the initiative. 34.Bh1? was a decisive blunder, as black after 34.--- Kf4! won a piece due to his attack against the white king ay h3. Although still a pawn up, white before the blunder anyway was in trouble as black had all the better pieces.



**Verbin vs Melaa**

**Valentina Verbin (2075)** versus **Sondre Melaa (2223)** saw another positional Italian duel, in which all the bishops and nothing else was exchanged within the first 15 moves. White established a queenside space advantage by playing b5 and d5, but black was some 25 minutes ahead on the clock and did fine due to his knight on f4. Black later instructively played f5 and fxe4 with promising attack prospects on the kingside. Although material still was balanced, black after 30 moves had a winning kingside attack.

Verbin did her best to create counterplay on the queenside, and during mutual time pressure she after 35 moves was threatening to win a pawn at c7 with her queen. Black still had a direct tactical win with 35.--- Ng4+! 36.Kg1 Nxf2!. Although natural, instead 35.--- g5? was much too slow, as white after 36.Qxc7 suddenly had real counterplay against black's king at h8. The position following this was highly unclear, with both players aiming to mate the opponents king on the kingside. Black short of time blundered with 38.--- gxh3?. The blunder was not an obvious one, but Verbin amazingly later found all the best moves. After 49 moves she could sacrifice a knight to exchange off the queens at h7 – as black's king and knight later were unable to stop white's passed b-pawn.

**Eirik Strøm Austad (1985)** and **Mathias Lind Schouten (2128)** had a delayed start as Schouten arrived 25 minutes delayed. Finally realizing that the round had started, he soon established a promising space advantage against a rather slow English fianchetto from white. Exchanging off the queens was not too ambitious from a black point of view – and then a draw was agreed in a fairly balanced position after 15 moves.



**Sian vs Strand**

Young teenagers **Shadi Sian (2108)** and **Vetle Bjørge Strand (2053)** discussed a rare and tactical Caro-Kann line, in which white after hesitating with his kingside development had to place his king a little awkward at f1. Black could castle long with a fairly healthy position. He however had an inferior pawn structure and lagged some 20–25 minutes behind on the clock, after spending 90 minutes for his first 16 moves. White at move 18 invited a queen exchange at b5. Black accepted the invitation and at the same time offered a draw. This was accepted in an approximately equal, but still

far from dead position, with two rooks, two knights and six pawns against two rooks, bishop, knight and six pawns.



**Myagmarsuren vs Bjerke**

**Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1952)** versus **FM Richard Bjerke (2096)** was a remarkable generation duel, as white is aged 12 and black 64. This too was a rather dynamic Caro-Kann, in which white got some initiative as black too long left his king undeclared at e8. A tense struggle followed as black placed his king at f8 and went for a pawn storm against the white king at g1.

23.--- g4? although consequent was too loose, but the variations were complex and difficult to find for both players. Sacrificing an exchange at e4 afterwards was a mistake from white according to the computers, but

still gave a jackpot as black short of time failed to find the tiny defence plank. As the smoke disappeared after 33 moves black had succeeded in winning back the material – only to realize he had no more checks and was unable to stop the white pawn at d7.

12 year old Evsuld was very happy to win his first game in the GM group and could be proud following his play today. Bjerke handled the situation like a great sportman, congratulating his young opponent and analyzing the game with pure chess enthusiasm.



**Krivenko vs Ytrestøyl**

The talented junior players **Dion Krivenko (2107)** and **Sindre Lyngsaunet Ytrestøyl (2045)** also decided to go for a Caro-Kann today. Ytrestøyl additionally gave his 3...c5?!-line another chance. It worked out better this time, as black following slow play from white could exchange queens and get a promising position with two rooks, two bishops and seven pawns against two rooks, two knights and seven pawns. Exchanging the light-squared bishop for a knight at b3 however, despite giving white a double pawn, was a positional misunderstanding. White later suddenly was better, as he had

the more active rooks plus a very strong knight at d4. Black's problems increased as he after 24 moves had only 12 minutes left on the clock. White intensified the pressure by intervening at the d6 outpost with his knight. Sacrificing a rook for the exchange might have been black's best practical try, but it anyway proved insufficient as white soon was in full control again with two rooks for rook, bishop and pawn in the endgame. 16 year old Krivenko in the end neatly demonstrated the attacking potential of such positions, and after 43 moves was about to mate the black king at a4.



**Liabøtrø vs Grønnestad**

**FM Pål-Ole Liabøtrø (2145)** and **WFM Anita Grønnestad (1970)** discussed a Trompovsky line in which white at move 3 gives up his dark-squared bishop for a knight at f6. White later castled short and black long. Although black's open g-file appeared more dangerous than white's b-file, the outcome with a balanced time spending was wide open after 16 moves. 17.e4?? however was a positional disaster, fatally weakening white's center and kingside. As Anita successfully demonstrated that she had understood this, Pål-Ole admitted his mistake and stopped the clock

only three moves later on. Although the position was still in material balance and the resignation at first sight was premature, Anita very well deserved the point as the computers gave the position as -7.

**GM Keith Arkell (2413)** after starting up with 2.0/3 had requested a walk over draw for round 4. Following this we had an uneven number of players this round, and so **Andreas Skrede Hausken (2050)** at 0.0/3 got a walk over bye.

# Open Group

In the Open, top rated **FM Joachim Solberg (2167)** after winning his first three games requested a walk over draw in the fourth round, claiming that he had to take care of his job in between the games.

Second rated **Mikael Aroven (1997)** got a tough and tight five-hour battle as black against the underrated junior **Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (1704)**, but succeeded in winning a drawish endgame with bishop and five pawns against knight and five pawns.

Second board was an even longer struggle, in which **Karim Ali (1696)** hit back with a counter attack from a more or less lost middle game, and after nearly six hours succeeded in winning a won rook endgame as black against **Lars Tormod Haugen (1861)**.



Haugen vs Ali

This over all was a long and somewhat shaky round on the top boards: On third board **Max Moe Pedersen (1881)** was more or less lost after 16 moves, but still succeeded in winning the endgame after 60 moves as black against **Simen Nikolai Storlid (1666)**.

The fourth board junior duel between **Gard Rye Høyfosslett (1735)** and **Vinjar Hammari (1853)** lasted «only» 42 moves, but still followed the same pattern: The frustrated white player wasted an overwhelming position in the middle game, and so a shaken black player after all won by a powerful counterattack.

44 year old Aroven and 62 year old Ali following this are sharing the lead at 4.0/4, half a point ahead of 47 year old Solberg and 18 year old Pedersen.

While the last Open in April was more or less totally dominated by players below 18, and the top rated players had a hard time winning games, we so far have a different pattern here. Top 15 list still includes many underrated young players. No complaints about the fighting spirit from young, very young or not so young players in this group, as the first nine boards today all had a winner.

The Elo gap in most games are smaller now than in the first two rounds, but still the number of games won by the underdogs is rather low. Latvian **Ramona Golsta (1766)** lost a wild attacking battle as white against **Philip Helland (1710)** today, and following this it seems unlikely that any women player here can candidate for top five.

Photos by Tom Eriksen