

FAGERNES INTERNATIONAL AUTUMN 2022

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

7



GM Group

After round 7 this tournament still has not, and has never had, any player leading alone. First board meeting between third rated GM Anton Demchenko and second rated GM S. L. Narayanan today was a safe and sound draw, and so was the second board meeting between first rated GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu and sixth rated GM Mads Andersen. Following this Demchenko, Narayanan and Andersen stayed at +4. They were later joined by seventh rated GM Abhimanyu Puranik, since he very well deserved won a long endgame as black against GM Kaido Kulaots on the third board. The fourth board also was a GM duel with a winner, as Sethuraman Sethuraman kept a strong grip all the way as white against Alan Stig Rasmussen.

Today's winner among the GM norm candidates was 16 year old American Kirk Ghazarian, now needing only 1.0/2 after an inspired win as white against Norwegian IM Elham Abdulrauf. Abdulrauf might still make a GM norm if winning both his final rounds, and likewise for IM/WGM Vaishali Rameshbabu following a long draw against FM Semen Mitusov today. Still seven players within half a point in the top as we now have Narayanan, Demchenko, Andersen and Puranik sharing the lead at 5.5/7, half a point ahead of Praggnanandhaa, Sethuraman and Ghazarian.

On first board, GM Anton Demchenko (2645) of FIDE and GM S. L. Narayanan (2663) of India started up with a positional Italian opening, in which the dark-squared bishops were exchanged at e3 in move 6 and the light-squared bishops at e6 in move 11. Chances after 16 moves were fairly balanced on the board as well as on the clock. Following some more exchanges, a very balanced and almost symmetric position with queen, rook, knight and six pawns on each side was observed after 25 moves. Demchenko made a small try to advance his kingside pawns, but offered a draw as he at move 36 exchanged the final knights at f8, with a very equal queen endgame to follow.



Demchenko vs Narayanan

Second board meeting between **GM Pragganandha Rameshbabu (2687)** and **GM Mads Andersen (2604)** on the other hand was an Accepted Queen's Gambit with 3.Nf3, in which white after exchanging one set of knights came 20 minutes ahead on the clock with a slight pressure on the board.

White advanced in the center with d5 and dxe6, getting a slightly better structure due to black's isolated pawn at e6.

Black however activated his queenside pawn majority, establishing a pawn at c4, and after 23 moves had a fairly sound position with queen, two rooks, bishop and six pawns against queen, two rooks, knight and six pawns. White made a try to play the rook and minor piece endgame after exchanging the queens and one set of rooks in the d-file. Black after a final and tricky rook exchange however had no problems in the endgame with bishop and five pawns against knight and five pawns.



Pragganandha

GM Kaido Kulaots (2515) and **GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2603)** on the third board discussed a closed Ruy Lopez, in which chances were fairly balanced after one set of knights and the dark-squared bishops were exchanged.

The players toyed around with a repetition around move 18–20, but black left it and took an initiative on the queenside with a c4-advance. As white put a knight on f5, black exchanged it for his light-squared bishop. Later black was slightly better as his knight at e7 was superior to the rather lame white bishop at a2. Puranik methodically increased the queenside pressure, and Kulaots anyway was in trouble before he blundered with the natural 30.Rad1? – overlooking 30... Qa5! with a highly unpleasant double attack on the a2-bishop and the c3-pawn. Black's extra pawn later was a strong passed pawn at c3, which after 51 moves had transformed into an unstoppable passed pawn at b2 in the queen endgame.



Kulaots vs Puranik



Sethuraman vs Rasmussen

GM Sethuraman Sethuraman (2645) versus GM Allan Stig Rasmussen (2531) was today's second Accepted Queen's Gambit with a GM from India on the white side and a GM from Denmark on the black side. This one was much more successful seen from the white side, as Sethuraman played the ambitious 3.e4!? and later got a notable space advantage due to his pawn at e5. Lagging behind in development because of his poor bishop at c8, black understandably tried to free his

position with an active 16... f5?. This exchanged white's pawn at e5, but weakened fatally the black kingside. White later pragmatically forced a queen exchange, as black had only scattered and weak pawns. With only seconds left on the clock, Rasmussen stopped it after 35 moves – as he apart from being a pawn down in a cramped position also was about to lose a piece.



Ghazarian vs Abdulrauf

The teenager duel between **IM Kirk Ghazarian (2446)** and **IM Elham Abdulrauf (2495)** obviously was a key game for the GM-norm chances of both players. The start was a rather unorthodox line of a closed Catalan, in which white had two strong fianchetto bishops and black some counterplay against an isolated pawn at c4. The clock too was balanced and fairly normal, as both players spent just above one hour for the first 20 moves. Taking back a rook at d8 with the bishop (instead of

using the also available rook) at move 23 here turned out to be a more or less decisive mistake, as black after 24.N3d4! could not withdraw his bishop from a6 to b7, but instead had to exchange it for a knight at b5. White following this got control over the c-file plus a strong outpost at c6. This in addition to an all the more active pair of bishops gave him a decisive initiative. Black's queenside pawn chain collapsed within a few more moves. Abdulrauf resigned after 36 moves as the passed white b-pawn was about to eat a piece.

16 year old Ghazarian following this win has a performance of 2625 and needs «only» 1.0/2 for a GM-norm. Abdulrauf was very disappointed about his own play in the two last rounds, and was happily surprised to learn that he can probably still make a GM norm if winning the his remaining games.



Sasikiran vs Urkedal

GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2636) and **GM Frode Urkedal (2523)** had a long discussion about a Ruy Lopez Berlin wall line. The queens and some other pieces were exchanged within the first 20 moves, leaving a fairly balanced and rather typical position with rook, bishop, knight and six pawns versus rook, two bishops and six pawns. Black obviously had the pair of bishops, while white had the better pawn structure and a three against two pawn majority on the kingside.

Nothing more happened until the position was drawn by a sound repetition after 28 moves.



Rameshbabu vs Mitusov

21 year old **IM/WGM Vaishali Rameshbabu (2451)** following yesterday's loss with black now needed as win as white against **FM Semen Mitusov (2415)**. Vaishali entered a London System with white, but this did not give much of an advantage today, as black after exchanging the dark-squared bishops at d6 played e5 and e4 with a space advantage. The position however was complex, as black had double pawns at d6 and d5 with a rather lame bishop at b7. Both players spent well above one

hour for the first 15 moves here. After the queens were exchanged a couple of moves later on, white held a slight queenside initiative. Still it was not easy to see this leading to a full point, as the pawn structure was very closed. Vaishali still left a repetition just before 40 moves. Doubling the rooks in the h-file apparently also gave nothing, as black could easily protect the pawn at h6. White's idea however was much more sophisticated, as she sacrificed an exchange in thin air at h5. Getting a knight and pawn for the rook, white trusted that her knight would be as good as a rook in a position with no open files. White got some chances as the queenside later opened, but Mitusov pulled the brake by sacrificing back an exchange to reach a drawn rook endgame with four pawns on each side. Mitusov demanded a draw by threefold repetition after 79 moves and Vaishali had no objections. The young Ukrainian refugee can make an IM-norm with 1.5/2 in the final rounds, but this has more or less no practical relevance as he has already completed all demands for the IM title. Much more interesting is the fact that Vaishali can still make her third GM-norm this tournament. Following this draw she however most probably needs to win her game in both round 8 and 9.

IM Linus Johansson (2461) versus **Tykhon Cherniaiev (2239)** was a Grünfeld Exchange duel, in which black gave up his bishop for a knight at f3 and snatched a center pawn at d4. White was not too worried about that, as his pair of bishops gave him a pleasant plus after he exchanged off the queens and won back the pawn at b7. The pair of bishops was the difference giving white a «clear small advantage» with rook, two minor pieces and five pawns on each side after 20 moves. Undefeated Cherniaiev however continues to defend remarkably well for his age. Following a few inaccuracies from white, black could after 25 moves park a highly disturbing knight at d4. The game was more or less over as Johansson felt forced to give up one of his bishops for the knight: True enough white won a pawn at e6 the next move, but black had no problems drawing the remaining rook and bishop endgame thanks to the opposite-coloured bishops and his active pieces.

12 year old Ukrainian refugee Tykohn Cherniaiev, now representing Germany, following this draw is above 2300 and still in the run for an IM norm after seven rounds. To make the norm he will need 1.0/2 or 1.5/2 from now on, depending on the Elo of his last-round opponent.



Johansson vs Cherniaiev

The Norwegian junior duel between **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2363)** and **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2445)** started up with a Grünfeld fianchetto, in which white exchanged at d5 to play with 9.Qb3 with a double attack on the d5 and b7 pawns. White snatched the pawn at b7, after which black sacrificed the knight at c6 to hunt the white queen. White had either the much better preparations or the much better calculations here: Black true enough won back the knight at c3, but white remained two pawns up with a big advantage.

Ingebretsen a few moves later won an exchange, and finished the game with style as he was a rook up in the final position after 35 moves. Kaasen following this collapse is definitely out of the run for a GM-norm. Ingebretsen following this strong win can still make his third IM-norm this week – if able to make 1.5/2 out of round 8 and 9.



Ingebretsen vs Kaasen



Thavandiran vs Nielsen

IM Shiyam Thavandiran (2353) versus **FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2384)** was a key game for the Danish IM norm chances in this tournament. The start was a Four Knights Opening in which black exchanged first his dark-squared bishop for a knight at c3, and then the light-squared bishop for the other knight at f3. The bishop pair was no danger as black could exchange his knight for white's light-squared bishop at b3. This exchange however repaired the white pawn structure, and soon afterwards white got a pleasant pressure in the e-file and on the kingside. White however hesitated too long when about to exchange off the queens. Following this black could activate his pieces with about equal chances in the remaining endgame with two rooks, bishop and five pawns against two rooks, knight and five pawns. One rook exchange later, black came better in the rook and minor piece endgame, as his knight at d4 was clearly better than white's rather passive bishop at g3. Black's decision to exchange the minor pieces following this came unexpected. The rook endgame with three pawns on each side however still was much better for black, as white's remaining pawns were one b-pawn and two g-pawns. As white immediately made a mistake and lost both the g-pawns, black after 60 moves had reached a won rook endgame with three kingside pawns against one queenside pawn. The position however still needed accuracy from black, as white's only remaining pawn was a passed pawn at b6. Black first apparently had found the right path, but then stumbled at the final hurdle as he after 65 moves took the pawn at b7, immediately instead of inserting 65.--- Rb6 to improve the position of his rook. Following this white could exchange his b-pawn for two of the black pawns, and the remaining endgame with rook against rook and e-pawn was only a draw. Nielsen following this jumpy and in the end bitter draw is still in the run for an IM-norm, but now needs to win both his last games.

English **GM Keith Arkell (2413)** and American **IM Justin Sarkar (2350)** discussed a London system in which black exchanged his knight for black's bishop at g3, and then played a Stonewall set up with d5–e6–f5. Black castled long, while white kept his king waiting at e1 and went for an direct attack with Rb1 and Nc5. This first appeared dangerous, but black succeeded in finding a fairly safe square for his king at a8 around move 23. White by then had spent some 65 minutes and black well above 80. During mutual time pressure the tide turned in favour of



Arkell vs Sarkar

black, and white's king at e1 was in some trouble as black hit in at c3 in move 34. As white defended inaccurately, black for a few moves had a winning attack. Sarkar however was too short of time to find the accurate moves. Although black was a pawn up with some attacking chances, white after the first time control had some counter pressure against b6 and a disturbing passed pawn at e6. 42.--- d4?? was a tactical blunder, as white suddenly could win with a cool tactical 43.e7! dxe3+ 44.Kg1. Remarkably both players missed this very important detail. White instead played a tactical 43.Qxb6+? Qxb6 44.Rxb6, after which black came a pawn up in the rook endgame. The e6-pawn still gave sufficient counterplay for a draw, which was agreed by a tricky repetition a few moves later on.

Emerik Våpenstad Roulet-Dubonnet (2343) versus **IM/WGM Padmini Rout (2390)** was a Benkő Gambit in which white kept an extra b-pawn at b5. Black blocked the pawn with a knight at b6 and has reasonable compensation, especially taking into account that white spent some 95 minutes for the first 20 moves. Chances were still about balanced until white after 28 moves, short of time on the clock, just blundered his vital pawn at d5 by moving the rook away from d1. White's position collapsed after this, and an accelerating Padmini won a full piece within a few more moves. Black following this anyway had an easy win when white at move 40 blundered two pieces in one move.



Roulet-Dubonnet vs Padmini

IM Ludvig Carlsson (2379) versus Shazil Shehzad (2224) was a Sicilian Najdorf duel in which white immediately after the opening went for a tactical Nxb5, winning three queenside pawns for a knight. Black's position appeared healthy after the queens were exchanged, but white had the more active rook and took the initiative as he set his three connected passed pawns into motion. Black later definitely did not have the time to snatch a pawn at h4 with his rook. Realizing that he sacrificed a bishop for two pawns to bring the rook back to active duty on the queenside. It arrived much too late, as white's passed a- and b-pawns supported by the active rook at b8 marched into promotion before move 40.



Carlsson vs Shehzad



Grave vs Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch

The Norwegian junior duel between **Jacob Templen Grave (2221)** and **FM Andre Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch (2329)** saw another Benkő Gambit, in which black with a fancy knight at d4 combined with pressure in the a- and b-file had full compensation for white's extra pawn at a4. White suddenly got a winning advantage as he was allowed to exchange off the disturbing knight and divert black's c5-pawn to d4 – blocking the diagonal for the bishop at g7 and opening the road forward for white's passed b-pawn.

White in turn pushed the pawn too fast forward with 27.b6?, somehow overlooking 27... Qa2! with disturbing counterplay against his back rank. White avoided loss of material, but had to exchange the rook at b1 and place his queen in a passive position at f1. Following this black could park his queen at b2 and control the b-pawn from behind. 30... d3?! instead of just 30... Nxb6 was unnecessary and then 31.Qxd3 Nxb6? was a blunder, giving white the chance to play 32.Ne7+! with a decisive attack against the black king. White missed that chance, which was the final one in this game. Although white kept an extra pawn into the queen and knight endgame, black's active pieces combined with white's too active king then saved the draw without too many worries.

IM Kjetil Stokke (2307) and **Shadi Sian (2108)** started up with an English fianchetto, later transposing into a closed Catalan which white appeared to be much more familiar with. White before 20 moves had two bishops against two knights, and although still in material balance his position was strategically won when he after 24 moves could establish a protected passed pawn at e6. Black in addition to his other problems had one minute against one hour on the clock. Stokke during Sian's time shortage had some kind of cramp and all the time hesitated to move his pieces forward. As black got in a b5 break he suddenly had some counterplay on the queenside. 38... bxc4? however was a time trouble mistake, after which white came back in control and could win decisive material by redirecting his dark-squared bishop from c3 to g3. 1-0 after 48 moves, as black realized he could not take back the bishop white had just used to take a knight at d6.



Stokke vs Sian

FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2161) versus **Tobias Lang Nilsen (2280)** was a Caro-Kann with 2.Nf3 and 3.Nc3, soon turning tactical as white went for a pawn storm on the kingside, while black snatched two queenside pawns with his queen. It appeared too greedy as the lone queen at c2 was black's only developed piece after 12 moves, while white



Al-Tarboush vs Nilsen

already had a decisive initiative then. It soon turned out that white could just exchange off the queens and afterwards win back the two pawns at b7 and d5 with a decisive initiative. White instructively doubled his rooks on the seventh rank and won a wood full of material before 30 moves.



Ganta vs Kvaløy

Joel Paul Ganta (2031) versus **FM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2278)** was a Queen's Gambit in which black played Bb4, then exchanged the bishop at c3 – and then snatched the new pawn at c3 with his knight. White put his other c-pawn at c5 and got reasonable compensation due to his space advantage and pair of bishops. Tactical complications followed as white with his own king at e1 played hardball on the kingside with g4 and g5. As black tried to kick away a white knight from g5 with 18... f6, white replied with an acrobatic 19.Bh7+ Kh8 20.Bg8 – threatening a mate with 20.Qh7.

Counter-tactics with 20... Nf3+! 21.Nxf3 Kxg8 now could have given black a pawn up and a better position, but white instead got a very strong attack for the piece after 20... g6? 21.Bxd5 fxe5 22.Qxe6. Black soon had to give back the knight. He later survived the direct mate attack by a tactical queen exchange. He still was a pawn down, and due to white's much more active pieces black soon had to give up an exchange in the rooks and bishop endgame. Ganta had a bad start following by some shaky games at Fagernes this week, but still will make a solid plus result following this win.

Mathias Lind Schouten (2128) and **Clément Frederic (2234)** started up with 1.d4 d6, but then transposed into a Dutch Leningrad in which black after 12 moves had moved all his kingside pawns, but still had six pieces on the first rank. Although creative, it was of course and after all dubious at best. White's somewhat strange reaction however was to exchange off the queens at the queenside, and later black with his pair of bishops was probably fine in the position with two rooks and two minor pieces on each side. After 30 moves black's bishops still gave him a nagging edge.



Schouten vs Frederic

White had fair chances for a draw until he blundered with the passive 31.Rf2?. Frederic was alert and immediately saw his chance to play 31... Rh4! followed by a tactical Rd4+, forcing white to give up his two minor pieces for the rook. The rest was a rather safe walk in the park for black, as his two bishops easily outnumbered white's rook in the endgame.

FM Nicolai Kistrup (2274) and **Valentina Verbin (2075)**

discussed a positionally messy Queen's Gambit with Bb4, in which black exchanged her knight for a bishop at g3 and started a pawn storm on the kingside. This aggressive strategy worked out fairly well. After 20 moves three sets of minor pieces were exchanged, both players had castled long, and black much due to white's backward pawn at e3 had an edge on the board. Black at this stage had some 35 minutes against 11 on the clock.



Kistrup vs Verbin

Five moves later, after winning the white center pawn at d4 in exchange for her f5-pawn, black had the safer king and the better attacking chances. Playing black against a player rated 200 points higher, Verbin still took the first chance to force a draw by sacrificing an exchange at c3 and give perpetual check against white's king.

The game between 14 year old Norwegian talent **Vetle Bjørge Strand (2053)** and Dutch **IM Gerard Welling (2272)** first was a rather pancake Modern opening, as black within the first 6 moves played g6–d6–a6–b6–h6. Black's strategy later was first to exchange the bishop at c3, disrupting white's queenside pawn structure, then to place a strong knight on the c5 square, and then to close off the position. White in turn exchanged off his dark-squared bishop for the knight at c5 and then helped black to close off the position. As both had completed their strategy, a draw was agreed in a bank box type of position after 34 moves – still with all 16 pawns on the board.



Strand vs Welling

Sondre Melaa (2223) and **Gunnar Stray (2015)** investigated a London system in which black first placed his bishop outside the pawn chain at g4, but then redirected it via f5 to c2 – and then exchanged it for a knight at b3. White in the meantime had developed his pieces to fine positions. Now getting an open a-file as well, he soon won a pawn at a7. After 22 moves the remaining endgame with two rooks, bishop and seven pawns against two rooks, bishop and six



Melaa vs Stray

pawns was much better for white, although still not hopeless for black as white's bishop at g3 hit pawn granite at e5. Melaa now in a good steam instructively opened air for his bishop with f4 followed by f5, and then advanced his passed b-pawn. After 32 moves he could safely sacrifice his rook for a bishop at e7, as b7 followed by b8=queen afterwards would win a full rook.

Eirik Strøm Austad (1985) versus **FM Mathias Unneland (2185)** was an English fianchetto in which white played too slow, while black was all the more aggressive with e5–e4–e3. As white had to exchange both his bishops and struggled with two rather lame duck knights at a3 and h1, black after 25 moves had a winning attack. Not accidently it turned out that a knight sacrifice with 26.--- Nxd3! worked out for black, as he within a few moves won back one of the white knights with two pawns more and an ongoing attack. Unneland as a gifted attacking player won heavy-weight material within a few moves after the time control.

The German-Estonian junior duel between **Laurin Perkampus (2123)** and **Dion Krivenko (2107)** was a Pirc opening in which white got a promising initiative after putting a center pawn at d5, as he had a pair of bishops and some more space for his pieces. At move 19 black took a big decision to exchange the d5-pawn, but white still was better due to the bishops and some pressure against a weak pawn at d6. Not unexpectedly both players here spent some 90 minutes for the first 20 moves. White for some moves had a promising attack coming up, but exchanging queens still was fine as white could win a pawn with a big advantage afterwards.

Perkampus today had less than one minute left after 27 moves (compared to move 29 on a normal day for him). Following this he failed to find the best moves afterwards – instead slipping down to a drawish endgame with rook, bishop and three pawns against rook, knight and three pawns. Black now was better due to his passed a-pawn, and as white put his bishop in an offside position just before 40 moves, the pawn became very dangerous in the fifth hour. Black proved able to win a piece for the a-pawn while avoiding an exchange of his final d-pawn. Later the endgame with rook, knight and d-pawn versus rook and c-pawn was a safe transport. Krivenko in the final move of the game became the first player of this tournament to promote a pawn into a knight, elegantly forking the two remaining white pieces – although various other moves also were winning then. This was the last game to finish in the GM group today, and Perkampus impressed the few spectators as he after losing the game analyzed it together with the opponent in a very joyfull tone.

Nicolai Østensen (2136) and **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2156)** discussed a

rather closed Ruy Lopez in which black's f5–f4 did not achieve too much on the kingside. White first had a pleasant center advantage and some pressure against the pawn at e5, but gave up most of his advantage as he strangely took back on f3 with the g-pawn



Østensen vs Westrum

instead of with the knight

after 14 moves. Both kings were a bit shaky in this game, as both players early decided not to castle. Although the d-file was open, white's king was fairly safe at e2, while the white rooks in the g-file made the black king at h7 rather scared. As the position opened around move 25, white's pair of bishops also gave him a strong initiative. Sacrificing a knight at b4 in this situation was a good practical try from black. It also worked out fairly well, as white instead of just continuing his kingside attack accepted the sacrifice and gave black some active counterplay.

White within a few moves forced himself to give up the queen for a rook, although the remaining position with two rooks, bishop and four pawns against queen, rook and four pawns still was rather unclear and double-edged. Black first blundered and so white got one more chance to win the game. Østensen however exchanged his rook instead of bringing it into the attack. Following an hour of maneuvering black later found a way to win the still not trivial endgame with queen and four pawns against rook, bishop and three pawns.

The teenager duel between **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)** and **Heine N. Johannessen (2033)** was an Accepted Queen's Gambit, in which white found better squares for his knights and kept an initiative after exchanging the c- and d-pawns. Both players not unexpectedly spent much time here, and had about 15 minutes left on the clock after 25 moves. White got a rather safe pressure after the queens were exchanged, and the rook and bishop endgame after 36 moves was painful for black due to his weak pawn at a6. As Fiskaaen made some inaccuracies before the time control, Johannessen succeeded in exchanging off the a-pawns as well as the bishops. The remaining rook endgame still was much better for white due to black's poor structure. The final rook endgame with four against three kingside pawns was close to lost for black from the start, as white had the more active king while black had one isolated e-pawn and two isolated g-pawns to defend. 1–0 after 59 moves, as white was about to win a second another pawn at g7.

Ask Amundsen (1869) versus **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2107)** was another talented junior duel and another positional Italian opening. White first had an initiative, but then helpfully gave black a dangerous f-file attack. Instead of trying to defend the kingside, white went for a creative rook sacrifice on d5. Unfortunately from an Amundsen point of view (but all the more fortunate from a Kreken point of view), it turned out that black instead of taking the rook could hit back with his own rook sacrifice at f2. As black first won a white bishop for his rook and then took the white rook more or less for free, black within a few moves came a bishop up in a totally won endgame.



Amundsen vs Kreken

The game between **FM Richard Bjerke (2096)** and **Per Fredrik Holand (2024)** started up as an English fianchetto in which white played b4–b5 without achieving much, and so black came better after establishing a center advantage with d5–d4. White succeeded in exchanging the pawn and reorganize his pieces. Chances after 30 moves hence were about balanced, although white still had to watch out for his backward pawn at d3. Bjerke still had some practical difficulties with two minutes against 40 on the clock.



Bjerke vs Holand

Around move 40 black was close to winning, as he had an extra pawn which was a passed pawn at d4. Black failed to push the pawn forward. Instead picking up a second pawn at a4 and a third at b5, he was still winning after 53 moves. Bjerke however kept his remaining pieces active and was rewarded as black allowed a tactical hit at h6, winning back two pawns for white. Failing to realize in time how exposed his king now was, black for too long overlooked a queen check at g8. Following this white, now playing very well, could hunt the black king around the open board and give mate with 70.Qd5.

Sindre Lyngsaunet Ytrestøyl (2045) and **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1952)** discussed a Sicilian with 3.Bb5+. White became too passive after the opening theory, hence black could strike back in the center and get an initiative. 23... Ng4! was a creative tactical maneuver increasing the pressure – the knight could not be taken with 24.fxg4 as Bxg2! would then trap the white queen at f1. Ytrestøyl somehow succeeded in saving his king while exchanging all the more pieces, and after the first time control had reached a drawish endgame with queen, rook, bishop and three kingside pawns left on each side. Myagmarsuren then became too eager to exchange off the few remaining pieces, and blundered a pawn. Remarkably the extra pawn from a computer perspective made more or less no difference in the queen endgame with f-, g- and h-pawn against g- and h-pawn. This of course was much less obvious for a human eye and brain, and Ytrestøyl very understandably played on for some 40 more moves before accepting a draw. Myagmarsuren wasted some promising chances in the middle game today, but in the end game final after more than 80 moves he instructively demonstrated an airy perpetual check against the white king.



Ytrestøyl vs Myagmarsuren

FM Pål-Ole Liabøtrø (2145) and **Andreas Skrede Hausken (2050)** discussed a Catalan in which black is allowed to keep the extra pawn, while white has about compensation after exchanging the c4-pawn with b3. 14... Qxd4? definitely was too greedy as white after 15.Sd5! got a strong initiative, and within a few moves won back an exchange at f8. The position afterwards was in material balance. White however had all the better pieces and within a few more moves won the backward black pawn at c6. White's queen and rook later had an easy win against black's queen and knight in the endgame. Black resigned after only 28 moves in hopeless position with his knight in a painful pin at f8.



Liabøtrø vs Hausken

Matan Prilleltensky (2222) and **WFM Anita Grønnestad (1970)** requested a walk over draw before round 7. Prilleltensky with acceptance from the arbiters later withdrew from the tournament, while Grønnestad will be back for the final rounds. Unfortunately, as the tournament now had an uneven number of players, she was given a walk over draw in the Swiss pairings for round 8.

Open Group



Solberg vs Aroven

When the much expected meeting between first rated **FM Joachim Solberg (2167)** and second rated **Mikael Aroven (1997)** finally came during round seven of the Open, it ended up as a 25-move draw. White got a pair of bishops and a notable pressure from this Sicilian Alapin opening. Black however succeeded in stabilizing the position with his king relatively safe at f7 and control over the key square at d5. Playing with an isolated pawn and lagging some minutes behind on the clock, Solberg accepted a draw although the computer programs still gave him a small advantage.

The second board junior duel between 16 year old **Olai Dyrhaug Eriksen (1767)** and 15 year old **Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (1704)** was a fairly balanced Sicilian duel, agreed a draw after 24 moves.



Hammari vs Pedersen

Third board meeting between **Vinjar Hammari (1853)** and **Max Moe Pedersen (1881)** became a more changing and entertaining junior duel, in which both players wasted some chances in an attacking battle middle game. Pedersen was better most of the time, and his two bishops in the endgame proved more valuable than white's rook and pawn.

Fourth board unfortunately had a walk over win for **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1667)**, as his opponent **Lars Tormod Haugen (1861)** had to leave Fagernes earlier than expected.



Ali vs Rolstad

Fifth board meeting between **Karim Ali (1696)** and **Morten Rolstad (1782)** was a tight four-hour battle, in which 62 year old Ali got another win following another tactical blow.

Still a lot of hard fighting in the Open, as the top boards were two out of only four draws among 27 games today. We look forward to a very exciting finish here, as second rated Swede Mikael Aroven is still running alone in the front with 6.0/7 – half a point ahead a Norwegian crowd with Solberg, Pedersen, Dyrhaug Eriksen, Skaar and Rynning! We can use this chance to remind that top four players in the Open will win money prizes, while top three will qualify for the next GM group. Top board pairings for round eight now will be Aroven white against Dyrhaug Eriksen, Solberg white against Rynning and Skaar white against Pedersen.

Photos by Tom Eriksen