

# FAGERNES INTERNATIONAL AUTUMN 2022

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 8



### GM Group

The GM group now after round 8 for the first time has one player leading alone: Second rated GM S. L. Narayanan has been playing great chess all this week, and today he won in convincing style as white against GM Mads Andersen. Narayanan moved ahead alone as the second board duel between GM Abhimanyu Puranik and GM Anton Demchenko was an intense 20-move draw.

Third board on the other hand lasted 123 moves and well above six hours – with a surprising outcome as GM Sethuraman Sethuraman succeeded in winning the queen endgame as black against top rated GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu. 17 year old «Pragg» handled this hard loss like the great sportman he is, but obviously it is a big disappointment for him to be out of the fight for the top three prizes before last round.

The Rameshbabu family overall had a disappointing day as sister Vaishali ran too short of time and lost after blundering in a won position as black against GM Allan Stig Rasmussen. Vaishali following this is out of the run for a GM norm. The two other remaining candidates on the other hand did very well: American IM Kirk Ghazarian held a draw with black against GM Krishnan Sasikiran without too many nervous moments, and now needs only a draw as white tomorrow to make his first GM norm at Fagernes. Norwegian IM Elham Abdulrauf won a shaky game as white against IM Ludvig Carlsson, and can make his first GM norm if winning the last round.

Narayanan following this is leading with an outstanding 6.5/8, half a point ahead of Demchenko, Sethuraman and Puranik. For round 9 Narayanan will be black against Sethuraman on first board, while Puranik will be black against Ghazarian and Demchenko black against the Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal. Abdulrauf black against Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots obviously also is a game that will get a lot of attention.

The first board meeting between **GM S. L. Narayanan (2663)** and **GM Mads Andersen (2604)** saw an Accepted Queen's Gambit with 3.Nf3, in which white due to his pair of bishops kept an edge after the c- and d-pawns were exchanged. Andersen had an uphill walk ahead after 18 moves, as he was nearly one hour behind on the clock and worse without much counterplay on the board. Narayanan noteworthy spent very few minutes for the first 18 moves, but then more than 20 minutes for move 19. The position became more double-edged as Narayanan after 26 moves sacrificed his pawn at b3.

Although probably mistaken from a theoretical point of view this still worked out very well from a practical point of view, as black failed to find the critical defence plan. Narayanan following this within a few moves could disrupt the black kingside pawns with Bxf6 and win back his pawn at h7 with a decisive attack against the black king. Andersen resigned instead of making his move 42, realizing that his king at h5 would be checkmate within a few moves if he recaptured.



**Puranik vs Demchenko**

Second board meeting between **GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2603)** and **GM Anton Demchenko (2645)** started as a closed Ruy Lopez, but as white played d4 the center opened around move 10–15. White sacrificed a pawn to open the e-file before black could castle, but Demchenko after 15 moves was half an hour ahead on the clock and appeared confident. White soon won back the pawn at d4, but afterwards found nothing better than exchanging off the queens. A draw was then agreed in a fairly balanced position after 20 moves.

**GM Pragganandhaa Rameshbabu (2687)** and **GM Sethuraman Sethuraman (2645)** started up with a positional Semi-Slav opening line, in which white played a bit slow with 4.Qc2 and 5.Nbd2. White temporarily sacrificed a pawn by allowing black to play 7... cxd4, but black then immediately returned the pawn with 8... d3!? – forcing white to accept an isolated pawn at d3 after 9.exd3. After the dark-squared bishops were exchanged at d2, white had the more active piece and a strong fianchetto bishop at g2, while black had the better pawn structure.



**Pragganandhaa vs Sethuraman**

Pragg spent some 65 minutes for the first 15 moves and lagged behind on the clock. White apparently became active as he played 19.f5. Exchanging the e6-pawn however only turned out to help black, and later white's isolated d-pawn gave black a sound advantage. Black following this had a sound pressure with queen, rook, knight and five pawns on each side after 33 moves. An important moment came after 41 moves, as black intervened at the f3 outpost with his queen – inviting a queen exchange. White reportedly would have been perfectly fine in the rook and knight endgame, but instead came worse after withdrawing the queen. 43.Nc6? actually was a blunder as black had a brilliant attacking win with 43... Rc8!! 44.d5 Nd4! 45.Rxd4 Re8 – threatening both 46... Re1 and Re2+. This went unnoticed by both players, and black later again had a pleasant pressure against the isolated pawn at d4. As black a few moves later was winning that pawn, white probably should have exchanged queens to play the rook and knight endgame instead of exchanging knights to play the queen and rook endgame. Although it took a lot of time, black with one extra kingside pawn and a safer king was much better here. Black demonstrated a good understanding of this endgame when forcing a rook exchange just before 60 moves, as the remaining queen endgame was very close to winning for him. Black picked up a second pawn at a3 after 78 moves and following this was two pawns up with a kingside majority and queenside majority. Due to the danger of perpetual check, the position still took a lot of time and demanded precision. Black through the sixth hour, with very few minutes left on both clocks, demonstrated good technique and made steadily progress – establishing a passed b-pawn which marched forwards towards b1. At move 110 both players missed a rather trivial Qb2+ which could have forced a queen exchange. As the passed pawn reached b4, black anyway was winning a few moves later on. At move 122 Pragg tried to sacrifice his queen for a stalemate. As Sethuraman of course did not want to take the queen, Pragg instead stopped the clock instead of making his move 124. The longest game of the tournament, this also was among the most important games. Top rated Pragg following this loss is out of the fight for top three before the last round, while unpredictable Sethuraman is all in it following this patient and very strong win.

**GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2636)** as white in Ruy Lopez against **IM Kirk Ghazarian (2446)** again went for a long Berlin wall duel, in which the queen and three sets of minor pieces were exchanged before 20 moves. The position with two rooks, knight and seven pawns on each side after 19 moves was perfectly fine for black in the short run. Due to black's inferior pawn structure with two c-pawns and an isolated pawn at e6, white still had some chances for a long term advantage. Black however succeeded



**Sasikiran vs Ghazarian**

in getting counterplay against the white pawn at e5 in the rook and knight endgame. Eventually black proved able to exchange the knights and win the e5-pawn, but still without any winning chances due to his scattered pawns. Draw agreed after 30 moves. Meaning that 41 year old Sasikiran should look over this white opening line again before the next test – while 16 year old Ghazarian can make his first GM-norm with a draw as white tomorrow.

**GM Allan Stig Rasmussen (2531)** and **IM/WGM Vaishali Rameshbabu (2451)** discussed an English fianchetto line, in which both players spent more than 50 minutes for the first 12 moves. White after exchanging the queens at d8 snatched a pawn at b7 and for some moves later had an extra pawn at c5, although black's active rooks gave her some compensation.

Vaishali probably was too careless when allowing white's passed pawn to reach c7, and had to sacrifice an exchange upon the pawn with some white advantage just before move 20. The remaining position with two rooks, two bishops and five pawns against rook, two bishops, knight and six pawns still was rather unclear. The mistakes came as both players soon ran seriously short of time, with Vaishali having less than one minute left after 20 moves. Placing the rook at d5 was a bad plan from white, as he within a few moves lost an exchange. Black following this after 24 moves had a won position with two bishops, knight and six pawns against rook, two bishops and four pawns. Black here had the much more powerful bishops plus an octopus knight at d3. Although white now was short of time, black however blundered badly with 25.--- Nxf2?? – somehow overlooking that white came a sound bishop up after the rather straightforward 26.Rxf2 e3+ 27.Rxf5 e2 28.Rf1. Vaishali left with five won and three lost games following this blunder is definitely out of the GM norm run for this week. Rasmussen despite very shaky games almost all the way is at 5.5/8 and in the fight for the money prizes in the last round.



**Rasmussen vs Vaishali**

**GM Frode Urkedal (2523)** versus **FM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2363)** was a positional Semi-Slav with b3, in which white got the pair of bishops as black exchanged his dark-squared bishop for a knight at d2. White opened the center for his bishops with a thematic e4-break, and then activated his queenside rook by castling long. Although black was able to exchange off the light-squared bishops, white had a promising pressure on the board with balanced clocks after 19 moves. Snatching a pawn at g2 with the queen turned out to be losing, although black anyway was in deep trouble. Urkedal in an inspired mood put his rook in the g-file, smashed in at g7, and won the black queen for rook and knight with a decisive attack going on. Ingebretsen is out as an IM norm candidate following this hard set back, while Urkedal is white on the third board and in the fight for the money prizes in the last round.



**Urkedal vs Ingebretsen**

Ukrainian **FM Semen Mitusov (2415)** and Estonian **GM Kaido Kulaots (2515)** meanwhile discussed a positional Sicilian Taimanov, in which chances after 15 moves were about balanced. The position suddenly lit up as white sacrificed a pawn with 16.b4?!. Black could have taken the pawn with his bishop, but decided instead to take it with the rook – sacrificing an exchange to get one pawn and a pair of bishops. The GM outplayed the FM positionally during the next hour, and following a pawn bayonet attack with f5–f4–f3 he after 30 moves had a decisive attack against the white king. Then Kaido somehow cramped, allowing Mitusov first to exchange the knights and then after 47 moves to save the draw in an nearly balanced position with queen, rook, bishop and four pawns against queen, two bishops and six pawns.



**Mitusov vs Kulaots**

**IM Elham Abdulrauf (2495)** versus **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2379)** was a Norwegian-Swedish duel between two school mates from NTG. It all started up with some kind of Queen’s Gambit in Advance as white went for the unusual 1.Nf3 d5 2.e3 c5 3.d4. White opened the e-file by exchanging his knight for the bishop at f5, and following a rook check black had to do with Kf8 instead of castling. White following this got a pair of bishop and some initiative, although white’s isolated pawn at d5 made the position double-edged. 23.--- Rc4? although active was a blunder, as a tactical 24.Rxe5! Rxe5 25.Bxe5 Bxe5 26.Bxc4 would win an exchange with a won position for white. Remarkably both players missed this rather clearcut line, and the position suddenly was balanced after white instead withdrew his queen to d1. Soon black instead could sacrifice an exchange to get a crushing attack against the white king. Black in turn wasted his chances, and so the players reached a drawish but still unbalanced endgame with rook, bishop and two pawns against bishop, knight and five pawns. White was better due to black’s loose pawns and somewhat exposed king. After 50 moves black had successfully exchanged off the remaining white pawns, but due to his king he was still not safe with bishop, knight and two pawns against rook and bishop. Carlsson under pressure made a decisive mistake when placing his knight in a passive position as g7, hence white instructively won a pawnless endgame with rook and bishop versus bishop and knight after 60 moves.



**Abdulrauf vs Carlsson**

16 year old Elham had a double pole out in round 6 and 7, but then a double pole in as he first succeeded in winning this endgame and then also was lucky with the pairings for round 9. Black against Kaido Kulaots obviously is a very hard challenge, but no complaints about that as Kaido’s Elo is just sufficient: Elham will make a performance of 2600,3 and record his first GM-norm if able to win the last round as well!

American **IM Justin Sarkar (2350)** versus Swedish **IM Linus Johansson (2461)** was a double-edged Benoni line, in which black first was perfectly fine as he was allowed to play b5 followed by b4, kicking white's knight back to b1. As white gave up his dark-squared bishop at f6, 15.--- Bxf6? was natural but reportedly still mistaken, as white now had a strong 16.f4!. White now came slightly better after placing a strong knight at c4. Black however succeeded in getting counterplay with Ng4–Ne3, and so black felt forced to sacrifice a rook for the knight. White first had reasonable

compensation for the exchange, but the advantage switched to black as he was given the chance to take white's key pawn at e5. White true enough won back the exchange, but black later was a pawn up with the safer king in the endgame with queen, bishop and four pawns against queen, knight and four pawns. Johansson later had no problems fulfilling the attack in the fifth hour.



**Sarkar vs Johansson**

**IM Kjetil Stokke (2307)** against **GM Keith Arkell (2413)** was some kind of English anti-fianchetto with 1.c4 b6 2.Nf3 Bb7 3.g3. White first had an initiative and hinted about a kingside attack when exchanging off the dark-squared bishops at g7. As white found no dangerous attacking plan, black could be fairly satisfied after exchanging the queens at b6 and the bishop for a knight at f3. Black had a slight pull in the endgame with two rooks and knight against two rooks and bishop, and just before 40 moves he won a pawn at a3. The remainings however were only two scattered pawns against one pawn. Stokke efficiently forced an exchange of the minor pieces to leave a dead drawn double rook endgame after 50 moves.

**IM Padmini Rout (2390)** versus **FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2161)** saw the unusual Owen's opening, starting with 1.e4 b6 2.d4 Bb7. Black without developing any of his knights later went for a somewhat odd Qd5–Qh5–Qa5 maneuver. As the queen additionally turned out to be badly placed at a5, white by sound means got a big advantage with more space and a pair of bishops. Black in desperation went for counterplay by sacrificing a knight for two pawns at g4. Padmini handled the situation very well and soon reached a winning position with two powerful bishops for knight and pawn.



**Padmini vs Al-Tarboush**

**FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2384)** and **Joel P. Ganta (2031)** discussed a Grünfeld Fianchetto line in which all the knights were exchanged early. White was allowed to exchange his knight at c6 when black had to take back with the pawn, and later had a pleasant structural advantage. After the queens were exchanged, black went for counterplay with his a-pawn, but white in the meantime picked up a pawn at c7 with a clear advantage. White for sure had a winning advantage in the rooks and bishop endgame, and due to his passed b-pawn also with rook, bishop and four pawns against rook, bishop and three pawns just before 40 moves. 41.Rb7? however was a slip, allowing black to win back the pawn with an alert 41... Bxb4!. Following this the remaining rook endgame with three pawns in each camp was a dead draw. Following his unfortunate move 41 Nielsen lost his last chance for an IM-norm in this tournament. Ganta still is playing very unevenly and scoring far above expected.



**Nielsen vs Ganta**

**Tykhon Cherniaiev (2239)** as white against **IM Shiyam Thavandiran (2353)** went for a Catalan opening, but something went wrong for white as black after cxd4 could establish a center advantage under favourable circumstances. After 18 moves material was in balance, although black after exchanging the light-squared bishops had the more active pieces and a pleasant e-file pressure. 12 year old Cherniaiev again defended like a grown up IM, and after 31 moves had succeeded in exchanging it all down to a queen endgame with four pawns on each side. Black had two connected pawns on the queenside, but they were still at b6 and a7. Both players obviously knew the good old rule about the most advanced passed pawn as the most important factor in a queen endgame: White immediately pushed his e-pawn forward to e5, after which black accepted the first available repetition of checks.



**Cherniaiev vs Thavandiran**

Cherniaiev undefeated with 4.5/8 for norm purposes had a performance just below 2450 after eight rounds. Following this a good result in the ninth round could have given him a slightly sensational IM-norm. Cherniaiev however felt ill during the hours after the round eight game, and so informed the arbiters that he unfortunately was not in shape to play round nine. No norm but still a very good result and a new title for the young Ukrainian refugee, as he by gaining rating 75 points passed 2300 and qualified for the FM-title. It is very unlikely to be his final title in FIDE. Still it was here and now a milestone he was very happy to pass, following a demanding war year outside the chess board.

Norwegian juniors **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2445)** and **Jacob Templen Grave (2221)** started up with 1.c4 c5, but as white played e4 they transposed into some kind of Sicilian Maroczy. After exchanging one set of knights at e5, white got the best pawn structure and a small advantage, although the open d-file gave black too some possibilities. As white succeeded in exchanging off both the rooks and the queen he still had the better pawn structure. Establishing a passed c-pawn, he was close to winning early in the fourth hour. Kaasen despite a not too motivating tournament situation completed this game in an inspired way, and just after the time control picked up a black pawn at a7 with a totally won endgame.



**Kaasen vs Grave**

Also Norwegian juniors **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2156)** and **Emerik Våpenstad Roulet-Dubonnet (2343)** investigated a Sicilian Taimanov line, in which black soon took over the initiative after exchanging the light-squared bishops. White later found no real counterplay and after three hours drifted into a rather hopeless rook and knight endgame with two pawns more for black.



**Westrum vs Roulet-Dubonnet**

The game between **FM Andre Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch (2329)** and **Sondre Melaa (2223)** unfortunately never started. Gjestemoen-Vonhirsch shortly before the round had to conclude that he due to illness was unable to play a tournament game today. Melaa following this won by walk over.



The young Estonian **Dion Krivenko (2107)** and the principled Frenchman **Clément Frederic (2234)** had an interesting discussion about a double-edged French Winawer line. White went for a kingside attack with h4–h5 without waiting for black to castle short. Black left his king awaiting at e8 and snatched a pawn at e5 with his queen. Both players spent about 75 minutes for the first 16



**Krivenko vs Frederic**

moves here. White around move 20 apparently had a promising kingside attack coming up. The game however somehow burned out as white for a moment stopped his attack to regain the pawn. Black still had the better pawn structure and was able to reorganize his remaining forces, hence the game was drawn by a fairly sound repetition after 26 moves.

**FM Mathias Unneland (2185)** and **Tobias Lang Nilsen (2280)** started up with 1.c4 c5, but later transposed into a Sicilian Maroczy as white later played e4. White later demonstrated the better understanding of these complex positions, as he kept a pleasant pressure against the e7-pawn and some chances for a kingside attack after exchanging three sets of minor pieces.



**Unneland vs Nilsen**

An attacking man by heart, Unneland creatively sacrificed a bishop at e6 to start a direct attack against the black king, and after winning back a rook he at move 43 could mate the black king at d4.

**FM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2278)** and **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2107)** started up with a closed Ruy Lopez, but the position soon opened as white exchanged the light-squared bishops at e6 and then realized the e4 break. Black appeared healthy as he after 20 moves had exchanged his e6-pawn for white's pawn at d4, although this left black's light kingside square somewhat vulnerable. Black's remaining worries about his kingside disappeared as he was able to force off the queens at move 23, and then a draw was agreed in a roughly balanced position one move later.



**Kvaløy vs Kreken**

**Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)** against **FM Nicolai Kistrup (2274)** was a Queen's Gambit in which black first put his bishop at b4 and then returned it to f8 via e7. This allowed white to establish a promising queenside space advantage with c5 and b4. Black was able to free his position with an e5-break, although white's more active bishops still gave him a plus. Black however demonstrated the superior understanding of this position as his position gradually improved during the following exchanges, until black had a troublesome initiative with queen, two rooks and seven pawns left at each side after 30 moves. As white still found no way to activate his pieces, black during mutual time pressure started a direct kingside attack and established a passed h-pawn, which decided the game within a few moves after the time control.



**Fiskaaen vs Kistrup**

Dutch IM **Gerard Welling (2272)** as white against Moldavian **Valentina Verbin (2075)** started up with a modest Colle system, but soon accelerated on the kingside with Ne5 followed by f4, Qf3 and g4. Verbin spent much time on the clock, but found a good plan to place one knight at f5 and the other at e4. This left a rather compact and tense position, in which all squares from e3 to e5, d3 to d5 and f3 to f5 were occupied after 20 moves. Black then decided to weaken her kingside with 20...g6? instead of continuing a fairly sound repetition with Bb7–Ba6. Welling following this demonstrated what a great attacking player he still can be, and started a gifted attack. As white had sacrificed an exchange, computers gave the position as unclear as late as move 30. Black however was under heavy pressure with almost no time left then, and so the game ended with a mate at d6 in move 37.



**Welling vs Verbin**

The talented Norwegian teenager duel between **Shazil Shehzad (2224)** and **Vetle Bjørge Strand (2053)** started up with a Caro-Kann in which black played 1...c6 and 3...c5?!. Not unexpectedly this gave a French-like position under favourable circumstances. Strand later spent very much time without finding any very good plans. Consequently white after 19 moves had a promising kingside attack with 47 against 5 minutes on the clock. Both players made some mistakes later on, but white was in the driving seat all of the time and before 40 moves landed in a won position with queen, rook, bishop and five pawns against queen, rook, bishop and three pawns. Black after 40 moves got new time but no new pieces, and resigned as he after 46 moves was four pawns down and still under attack.



**Shehzad vs Strand**

Also talented Norwegian teenagers **Shadi Sian (2108)** and **Mathias Lind Schouten (2128)** had a not too exciting half an hour draw. The opening was a Modern, which had symmetric pawns and very balanced chances after white decided to exchange d-pawns at e5 and queens at d8.



**Sian vs Schouten**

**Laurin Perkampus (2123)** and **Eirik Strøm Austad (1985)** made a modest start with a Classical Nimzo-Indian opening, but this game soon accelerated as white played an ambitious 5.e4 and 6.e5. Black got his counterplay with c5 and Ne4, and a fairly tense struggle followed. White lagged a quarter behind on the clock, but kept a slight initiative after the queens were exchanged. The endgame with two rooks, bishop, knight and four pawns after 30 moves appeared drawish, although white still left a repetition to play for a win. Perkampus sensationally had 22 minutes left on the clock at that stage. White held an initiative also after the knights were exchanged, but the opposite-coloured bishops then voted overwhelmingly for a draw. Now half an hour behind on the clock, Perkampus accepted a draw by repetition after 38 moves.

**Gunnar Stray (2015)** today tested out another Queen's Pawn opening with 1.d4 2.Nf3 3.Nc3 and 4.e4 as white against **FM Richard Bjerke (2096)**. Although white got a space advantage, black apparently first was fine. White however got a promising edge around move 20, partially due to his dominating pawn at e5 and partially due to black's backward pawn at c6. Black however was well alive until he blundered with 25... Rxf3? – probably overlooking that white after the straightforward 26.Qxf3 Bxg5 27.Qf7+ Kh8 had a tactical 28.Qxd7!, winning an exchange instead of losing two minor pieces for a rook. White following this soon had a trival endgame win with two rooks and seven pawns against rook, bishop and seven pawns.



**Stray vs Bjerke**

**Per Fredrik Holand (2024)** and **FM Pål-Ole Liabøtrø (2145)** in the meantime discussed a dynamic Benoni, in which white first got a pair of bishops and a clear advantage after intervening at c6 with his knight. Inviting further exchanges with 19.Nd5? however was a grave positional misunderstanding, as white's pawn at c6 suddenly became a weakness after black had the chance to exchange off the bishop at f3.

Liabøtrø within a few more moves

efficiently cashed in the pawn at c6, and after 30 moves was a sound pawn up.

Forcing a queen exchange in turn was a

mistake from black, as white's active rooks later gave him enough counterplay for a draw in the double rook endgame. Holand fair enough accepted to exchange one of the rooks to win back the pawn. The remaining rook endgame with three pawns on each side still gave a few possibilities for both players as white had c-, f- and h-pawns, while black had f-, g- and h-pawns. Sacrificing a pawn with 47.--- g5+?! was creative, although probably slightly dubious from black. White however missed it completely as he allowed black to take back the pawn at g5 with his king, while running over to the c-pawn with his own king. The following passed pawn race was winning for black, and so Liabøtrø won the game by an efficient endgame counter attack.



**Holand vs Liabøtrø**

**Evsuld Myagmarsuren (1952)** versus **Nicolai Østensen (2136)** was a duel between two highly talented 12 year old Norwegians. The start was a Classical French opening, entering an attack race after white castled long and black short. White first had the more dangerous attack and then won two minor pieces for a rook. Myagmarsuren however had spent way too much time to get the very good position today. 32.Bf1?? following this was a horrible blunder turning the game all around, as black after 32.--- Qd1+ 33.Ka2 Rc1 suddenly had a mating attack. After 34.b3

black with half an hour left on the clock very strangely missed a mate in two with 34.--- Qc2+ 35.Bb2 Qc1. After instead 34.--- a4?? 35.Bb2, the position for a few minutes was highly unclear.

35.--- Rc8? was a mistake, after which white could have a clear advantage with 36.Qb6! or 36.Be2!. Having only seconds left he instead blundered with 36.bxa4??, and then resigned as the now alert black player replied 36.--- d4! with 37.--- Bd5 mate coming up. A lot of mistakes from both players, but still a highly creative and entertaining game between two future chess stars.



**Myagmarsuren vs Østensen**

**Heine N. Johannessen (2033)** and **Ask Amundsen (1869)** started up with 1.d4 Nf6, but following an early c5 from black and a later e4 from white still transposed into a Sicilian Maroczy line. This came under favourable circumstances for white, as black had postponed his castling. Black then blundered a pawn as he became too eager to exchange off the dark-squared bishops, overlooking that white after 15.Qg5! was threatening both the c5 and the g7 pawn. White immediately used his chance and later was a pawn up with an ongoing attack against the black king at e7. An overwhelming position for white suddenly became very unclear as white at move 25 overlooked a tactical 25... Rxc2+!, winning back the pawn with counterplay against the white king. Black following this succeeded in reaching a drawish endgame with queen, bishop and five pawns against queen, knight and five pawns. White however staredt over again with his winning attempts, creatively walking his king up to g5 at move 41. The position reportedly still was approximately in balance, but as black blundered in the next move white's queen and knight soon demonstrated a winning attack.



**Johannessen vs Amundsen**

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (2050)** versus **Sindre Lyngsaunet Ytrestøyl (2045)** was another Caro-Kann with 3... c5?!, again transposing to a French-like position under favourable circumstances for white. White castled long and had a promising attack going on, as black played Kf8 followed by Kg8 instead of castling – leaving the rook stuck at h8. White after 21 moves creatively sacrificed his bishop at a6 to hit in at e6 with a direct attack against the black king. Although not necessary this for sure was sufficient to win, as white for the bishop got four pawns out of which three were connected passed pawns. Ytrestøyl however fought on well and somehow was able to stop white's passed pawns at a5 and b4, while finally bringing his rook into action via h7. Black was short of time but about to pass the time control after 39 moves, in a now rather messy position with queen, knight and four pawns against queen, bishop, knight and one pawn. Then white however much too fast played 40.Qxh6?? – winning the final black pawn, but overlooking that black (due to the pin of white's c2-pawn) could play 40... Qb3+! with a mate in three more moves to follow.



**Hausken vs Ytrestøyl**

**WFM Anita Grønnestad (1970)** had a walk over draw today, but will be back tomorrow.

# Open Group

The big duel between first rated **FM Joachim Solberg (2167)** and second rated **Mikael Aroven (1997)** continued during round 8 of the Open group. Before the start of this round Solberg had won all his games except for an internal draw against Aroven in round 7, while Aroven also had another draw from round 6. Aroven however had played his game every round, while Solberg for working reasons had requested a walk over draw for both round 4 and 6. Aroven following this was at 6.0/7 and Solberg at 5.5/7.

Solberg now entered the ring from the white corner as a big favorite against **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1667)**, and indeed needed only just above two hours to win by a crushing attack.

28.Nd8+ here was the unusual and strong final move, forcing black to give up his queen to avoid a mate.



**Solberg vs Rynning**

Aroven as white against the talented Bergen junior **Olai Dyrhaug Eriksen (1767)** meanwhile had made a slow start with 1.b3 and got less than no advantage from the opening. After 35 moves, the first board position with queen, rook, knight and five pawns against queen, rook, bishop and five pawns still was drawish.

16 year old Eriksen again running short of time however played too carelessly, allowing Aroven to pick up first a pawn and then an exchange before the first time control. In the fifth hour Aroven efficiently sacrificed back the exchange to force a won queen endgame with two extra pawns. Aroven following this kept his tiny lead at 7.0/8, ahead of Solberg at 6.5/8.



**Aroven vs Eriksen**

Third board was a teenager duel between **Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (1704)** and **Max Moe Pedersen (1881)**, in which a winner could also reach 6.5/8. The game made a rather original start with 1.Nc3 d5 2.e4 d4. White for a while later was clearly better due to his pair of bishops, but helpfully exchanged it all down to a rook and bishop endgame which was an easy draw due to the opposite-coloured bishops. Solberg following this remained an unshared second before the last round, while a winner on board four could join Skaar and Pedersen at shared third place with 6.0/8.



**Skaar vs Pedersen**

A draw in this fourth board generation duel was considered highly unlikely, as neither 62 year old **Karim Ali (1696)** nor 16 year old **Philip Helland (1710)** had made any draw from the first seven rounds! The game became rather one way driven after the Sicilian opening, as Helland with the black stones soon took over the initiative and won a sound queenside pawn. As Helland was also more than half an hour ahead on this clock, his extra passed b-pawn won decisive material well before 40 moves.



**Ali vs Helland**

Fifth board finished around the same time, with a violent kingside attack win for the Bergen junior **Gard Rye Høyforsslett (1735)** as white against **Sigurd Kittilsen (1864)**.

No real sensation was observed on the top ten boards this round, but the strongly underrated 13 year old **Even Huneide Hetland (1432)** came close to winning in the middle game and got an endgame draw as black against third rated veteran **Roaul Abrahamsson (1904)**.

Fourth rated **Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (1893)** although more than 50 years younger than Abrahamsson also has had a disappointing tournament, and today failed to save a difficult rook endgame as black against **Morten Rolstad (1782)**.

The quality of the games in the Open true enough is «somewhat uneven», but still no complaints about the fighting spirit as 18 out of 26 games in round 8 got a winner. We look forward to an exciting final round 9, in which the top board duels will be Maxi Moe Pedersen versus Mikael Aroven, Ben Samuel Groth Skaar versus Joachim Solberg and Philip Helland versus Gard Rye Høyforsslett.

**Photos by Tom Eriksen**