

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT 7



### GM Group

The fourth-board duel between GM Raja Rithvik R and GM Titas Stremavicius following a successful preparation from black ended up a two-hour draw. The first-board duel between GM Rinat Jumabayev and IM Jonah Willow and third-board duel between IM Ameet Ghasi and IM Svyatoslav Bazakutsa both saw white attacking for a full point, although both also saw black defending well and saving a draw in the fifth hour. Today's big winner on the top boards following this was 27 year old Indian GM Sayantan Das, sacrificing his knight to win a great three-hour attacking game as white against IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy.

Remarkably the tournament still has four candidates for a GM-norm: Willow will do with 1,5/2 and Ghasi might do with 1,5/2, while Bazakutsa and Kvaløy both needs 2/2 (and a qualified last round opponent). IM Moksh Doshi never really was in the run for a GM norm this week, but became a candidate for the top three prizes as he today won by strong positional endgame play as black against GM Erik Blomqvist.

Indian GM Sayantan Das had a slow start with 0,5/1 and 2,0/3, but having won his last four games he is now leading alone at an outstanding 6,0/7. Jumabayev and Willow are the only players at 5,5, while Stremavicius, Ghasi, Bazakutsa and Doshi at 5,0 also might reach top three. Das now will get a critical test as black against Willow, while Jumabayev will be black against Doshi and Ghasi black against Stremavicius.



Sayantan Das

This third last round was mixed at best for the remaining IM-norm candidates, but remarkably that run still includes no less than seven players – all highly talented teenagers.

Norwegian CM Martin Holten Fiskaaen (15) bitterly lost a drawish rook endgame as white against GM Frode Urkedal today, but still is the only one with a current performance above 2450 and so needs «only» 1,0/2 from now on. Norwegian CM Martin Øksendal (16) won today and might do with 1,5/2, while Norwegian FM Alexander Øye-Strømberg (18), Estonian FM Dion Krivenko (18), Indian FM Ritvik Krishnan (17), American FM Shubh Jayesh Laddha (16) and Norwegian CM Evsuld Myagmarsuren (14!) all needs 2/2 including a qualified last-round opponent.

18 year old Irish WIM Trisha Kanyamarala is not in the list of title norm candidates, but took a full point lead in the run for the best woman as she unexpectedly won a tough tactical game as white against WGM Fiona Sieber today.



Jumabayev

The first board duel between **GM Rinat Jumabayev (2577)** and **IM Jonah Willow (2420)** started up like a Symmetrical English Four Knights, in which black was perfectly fine after exchanging his queenside knight at c6. Black after 14 moves was ahead on the clock and apparently also slightly ahead on the board, with a nice bishop on the d4 outpost.



Willow

Jumabayev however came up with a strong plan first to exchange the light-squared bishops and then to sacrifice an exchange:



21.Nxd4 Nxd4 22.Rxd4! exd4 23.Bxd6 Rf7 24.e5 fxe5 25.Qg6+ Rg7 26.Qe6+ with ongoing pressure. White's attacking material however was limited, and black defended creatively – sacrificing an exchange to eliminate the white bishop. Jumabayev ran short of time and offered a draw as the players after 34 moves were about to reach a drawish queen endgame.

Willow of course could be well satisfied to survive as black against the top rated player. Unbeaten at 5,5/7 the 21 year old Englishman currently has a performance of 2621, but still needs 1,5/2 more to complete his first GM norm.

**GM Sayantan Das (2471)** versus **IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2484)** was a closed Ruy Lopez which soon opened, leaving black with an isolated pawn at d6 and white with a sound advantage. The position after 16 moves was known to theory and considered better for white. 20.--- Qb6? later was a mistake as white could – and did – accelerate his attack with a classical knight sacrifice:



21.Ndf5! gxf5 22.Nxf5 Qc5 23.Bb1 Nc6 24.Rc1 Qb4 25.Bc3 Qa3 26.Nxh6+ with a winning attack. Sayantan played very well throughout this game and won it within eight more moves. Losing this game of course was a hard set back for Kvaløy’s norm chances, although 2/2 from now might still be enough to complete the GM title for the Norwegian champion.

The very important third board duel between English **IM Ameet Ghasi (2503)** and Ukrianian **IM Svyatoslav Bazakutsa (2483)** took a rather safe approach with an English fianchetto. The last minor pieces left at move 21, although white due to his better pawn structure kept an edge. White’s advantage around move 20–29 much came because of his pressure against the backward black pawn at d6. Taking the pawn at move 30 still was a mistake, as the resulting rook endgame with an extra white a-pawn first was a draw.



Bazakutsa was under double pressure on the clock and board towards the end of the fourth hour, but 37.Rxc5?! more or less gave up the winning attempts as black after 37.--- Rxa6 had reached a fairly safe rook endgame with four against three kingside pawns.

Bazakutsa was close to falling out of the GM norm run today, but might still do it with 2/2 from now on. Ghasi might complete his GM title with 1,5/2, but then needs to play one of the GMs above 2480 in round 9. Getting black against GM Titas Stremavicius in round 8, he still needs another GM in the last game to keep any norm chances.



**Stremavicius**

**GM Raja Rithvik R (2514) versus GM Titas Stremavicius (2541)** saw a Queen's Gambit Tarrasch with a lot of early exchanges. After exchanging the queens at move 18, white was a pawn up with two rooks, one knight and six pawns against two rooks, one knight and five pawns. While black had spent almost 45 minutes on the clock, black had six minutes more than he had before move 1. It soon turned out that black had sufficient pressure against the white queenside, and a draw was agreed upon white's suggestion five moves later on.



**Doshi**

**GM Erik Blomqvist (2483) versus IM Moksh Doshi (2377)** was a Four Knights Opening in which the e-pawns plus one set of knights left within the first 10 moves. Blomqvist was well ahead on the clock but had only a very light initiative on the board in this rather symmetrical position. Following sound exchanges the players after 29 moves had reached a balanced endgame with rook, bishop, knight and seven pawns on each side. White's active plan with 30.c4?!, 31.b4?!, and 32.c5?! succeeded only in weakening his pawns, while black directed his pieces to better positions and suddenly had a strong initiative. Blomqvist under pressure on the clock failed to find any good plan for the next moves, and so black soon after 40 moves could pick up white's d4-pawn and reach a won rook and knight endgame.

21 year old Doshi after this win can be in the fight for top three prizes, but following his relatively slow start he is still not in the run for a GM-norm.



**Kanyamarala**

Israeli **IM Benny Aizenberg (2423)** and Irish **IM Tarun Kanyamarala (2369)** discussed a Sicilian Kalashnikov line, leading to an approximately balanced position after exchanging one set of knights and the dark-squared bishops. The players all the way made good moves, but failed to come up with any brilliant ideas, hence they before move 40 reached a balanced queen and rook endgame with five pawns on each side. The draw became obvious as the final queenside pawns disappeared at move 42, although the players for unknown reasons continued for almost 20 moves more before signing the scoresheets.



**Urkedal**

So far successful **CM Martin Holten Fiskaen (2259)** as white in a Sicilian against **GM Frode Urkedal (2559)** went for a positional Moscow line with 3.Bb5+, leading to a fairly balanced Maroczy Bind after exchanging one set of knights and the light-squared bishops. Chances after 17 moves were approximately balanced on the board, although black had some 20 minutes more on the clock. The rook endgame with six pawns on each side after 31 moves was a draw. Black however had the better structure and white within a few moves felt forced to give up a pawn. The resulting endgame with four kingside pawns for both players, plus an extra a-pawn for black, is known as a theoretical draw when white can place his rook in an active position behind the a-pawn. White's kingside pawns here

however had advanced to e5 and h5, making his defence a bit more difficult ...



41.g4? look consistent, but probably was the losing move, as black now gets a new possibility to confront the g-pawn with a f5-break. 41.--- a3! 42.Kg3 Ra1 43.Kf3 a2 44.Kg2 f5! 45.gxf5 exf5 46.Ra7+ Kf8 47.Kh2 g4 48.Ra4 Ke7 49.Ra6 f4 50.Kg2 f3+ 51.Kh2 g3+! and white resigned as 52.Kxg3 Rg1+ or 52.fxc3 f2 both are hopeless. Third rated Urkedal finally steams upwards before the final rounds. Losing this tight game of course was a set back for Fiskaaen's IM-norm chances, although 1,0/2 from now still will be sufficient.



**Myagmarsuren**

**GM Elham Amar (2540)** as white in a French against **CM Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2171)** somewhat unexpectedly transposed from Winawer to a rather symmetrical Exchange line after 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.exd5. Black allowed his dark-squared bishop to be exchanged for a knight, and white following this had an edge due to his pair of bishops. Following 16.--- Nf4 white exchanged his dark-squared bishop for the knight, and then exchanged the light-squared bishops, keeping a very slight initiative. Black however chose an inaccurate plan afterwards, allowing white to create real pressure against the black pawns at b7 and d5. Amar methodically increased the pressure and within move 27–31 won both pawns. The remaining rook and knight endgame was a fairly safe win for a 2500-player. Myagmarsuren still has a score far above expected and sensationally he still is in the run for an IM-norm,

although he following this will need to win the remaining two games.



**Mitusov**

The highly talented Norwegian teenagers **FM Alexander Øye-Strømberg (2248)** and **IM Semen Mitusov (2486)** discussed a Sicilian Maroczy Bind in which no minor pieces were exchanged after 18 moves, leaving white some space advantage. The game later deadlocked for some two hours, as white was better but had difficulties making progress. Black had blocked the kingside and stopped white's queenside passed pawn at b5. 47.Ra6? was a strange mistake as black could now eliminate the pawn at b5 and suddenly came better. Black's extra pawn however was a backward pawn at d6 and his kingside still needed much attention. Consequently the game was still agreed a draw by repetition after 57 moves.



Hillarp

Indian **IM Sidhant Mohapatra (2369)** and Swede **GM Tiger Hillarp (2455)** entered a Sicilian Najdorf attacking race: White castled long and started an attack on the kingside, while black kept his king undeclared at e8 and started a counterattack in the b-file. Black here got the upper hand before move 20, as his own king remained remarkably safe at e8. White apparently had fair chances as he ten moves later had two rooks, bishop, knight and four pawns against queen, bishop, knight and five pawns. White's weakness on the dark squares combined with his more open king still made the position more or less lost, and the Tiger after the time control soon finished the game in style:



43.Bf2? was the decisive mistake as black now had 43... Qb1+ 44.Ke2 Qc2+ 45.Ke3 Bd2+! – and white resigned as 46.Rxe2 Qe4 is mate while 46.Ke2 Bc1+ loses a rook. The Tiger still needs a strong spurt to reach a share of the top five prizes, but following this win is a big favourite for the best veteran prize.

Australian-Norwegian **IM John Paul Wallace (2373)** as white against American **FM Shubh Jayesh Laddha (2308)** went for a somewhat delayed English fianchetto, in which black had no problems after placing his king at h7. White following his more exposed king had a painful middle game, but somehow managed to defend and exchange pieces without losing any pawns. Black finally won a pawn as the players entered the queen endgame, but then white had his defence fairly under control:



34.Qd7! again demonstrated the importance of activity in queen endgames. Black after 34.--- Qxh4+ 35.Kg1 Qg5+ 36.Kf1 Qc1+ 37.Kg2 was two pawns up and to move, but due to his open king and weak seventh rank found nothing better than repeating checks for a draw. 16 year old Laddha is still in the IM-norm run following this draw, but now needs 2/2 with a strong last-round opponent.

Swedish **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2334)** versus Indian **FM Namitbir Singh Walia (2351)**

was an English fianchetto which became very open following a lot of early exchanges. Having exchanged the queens at d1 at move 9, white two moves later on happily gave up his fianchetto bishop for a knight at c6. Predictably white following this had the better pawn structure.

Black's pair of bishops first balanced this, but white suddenly came clearly better as black very strangely gave up his dark-squared bishop for a knight with 18.--- Bxc3+? Black probably hoped that the opposite-coloured bishops would assure a draw, but this game like several others in this tournament demonstrated that opposite coloured-bishops as a

defensive weapon are much less useful with rooks still on the board. Carlsson picked up the loose black h-pawn at move 34, leaving an eternal struggle in which white with an extra pawn could play on with no risk. Walia defended well for a long while, but running short of time he after 61 moves lost another pawn and soon drifted into a hopeless rook endgame.



**Carlsson**





Sasikiran

Indian **GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2571)** as white against Norwegian **FM Gustav Gudbrandsen (2197)** went for a positional Torre Attack with 1.d4 2.Nf3 3.Bg5 – leading to a symmetrical center and approximately balanced chances. White allowed black to win the pair of bishops with Nh5–Nxg3, as white’s knights were in no way less worth with a closed center and seven pawns on each side. Sasikiran and his knight gradually established a positional grip, and after 26 moves had won the black center pawn at e5. Black got some activity and white’s full point was not given when the queens were exchanged at move 32. Black first choice in the rook endgame here turned out to be decisive:



The position is rather closed, hence white’s winning plan is not obvious after 33.--- Kf8! followed by 34.--- Ke7. Instead the tempting 33.--- f6? allowed a cunning 34.Rd1! Rxe5 35.Rd8+ Kf7 36.Rb8, after which white soon won another pawn and got a decisive three against two pawn majority on the queenside. Gudbrandsen definitely had a honest loss as black against a GM close to 2600 today, but in chess a honest loss still gives zero points in the list.

**FM Ritvik Krishnan (2206)** versus **IM Hampus Sørensen (2423)** saw a double-edged Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein duel, in which white had the pair of bishops and accelerated in the center with an ambitious f3 and e4. 21.e4?! however was not well timed, and black soon won an exchange following a pseudo-sacrifice:



21.— dxe4 22.Nxe4 Nd5 23.Qd2 Nfe3! 24.Rxe3 Nxe3 25.Qxe3 f5 – although 26.Nf6+ gxf6 27.Qxh6 still disrupted the kingside and gave white some counterplay. Black following this had a material advantage and also made the better moves. Sørensen sacrificed back an exchange to get a winning attack – and then forced a queen exchange to reach an easily won rook and bishop endgame. 17 year old Rithvik Krishnan following 3–2 against five GMs now has 0–2 against two IMs, but still can make an IM-norm out of this Fagernes week if able to win his remaining two games.



**Krivenko**

**FM Dion Krivenko (2244)** and **GM Torbjørn Ringdal Hansen (2415)** soon left the book to discuss a positional Sicilian Rossolimo position, in which a lot of pieces were exchanged fairly early. White after 26 moves, due to his better pawn structure, had a sound plus with two rooks, one dark-squared bishop and five pawns on each side. Krivenko played on for a win and shortly before move 40 won a pawn at h6.

White later somehow should be winning with one passed pawns at a7 and another one at h4, although black’s passed c-pawn was highly disturbing. Following some mistakes from both players, black after 52 moves had escaped into a drawn rook endgame with f-pawn versus h- and f-pawn. Still the endgame drama was not entirely over:



Now 53.--- Ke7 to bring the king in front of the passed pawn was a fairly safe draw. With 18 minutes left on the clock, the GM instead went for the risky 53.--- Rg4??. Krivenko had only one minute left on the clock, and black after 54.Rc8? Ke6 55.Tf8 Rg1 56.Kh4 Rg4+ 57.Kh3 Rg1 58.Rh8 Kf7 scraped a draw. Instead 54.Rg2! Rxf4 55.h6 Rf3+ 56.Rg3 Rf1 57.Kg2 could have been a study-like win for white. Krivenko wasted a big chance for a full point in this endgame, although draw against a GM of course still is a good result for the Estonian junior. Krivenko too is still in the run for an IM-norm, although he now needs two more wins with another strong opponent in the last round.



Vijayakumar

The teenager duel between **Rishi Vijayakumar (2172)** and **CM Martin Øksendal (2271)** was a rather closed Grünfeld, in which black was allowed to keep an extra pawn at c4. White spent 60 minutes and black above 70 for the first 13 moves. On board was a tight positional struggle in which black was a pawn up, while white had a better development and following 11.d5 also a center advantage. White after 21 moves had broken up the c-file and balanced the chances, although Øksendal won back the initiative following a tactical 22.--- Nd4! afterwards. During mutual time pressure the position later jumped a bit back and forth between unclear and better for black. The decisive moments came at the time control, as white was about to win back the pawn while black still tried to attack the white king:



39.Rd2 Rc3 40.Qb8+? Kg7 41.Qxa7? Qf3+ 42.Kh3 Rd3 43.Rxd3 Nxf2+ 44.Qxf2 Qxf2 and black soon won. Øksendal following this shaky game win can reach his first IM-norm with 1,5/2, but he will get a tough test as white against second rated GM Krishnan Sasikiran in the second last round.

**Shadi Sian (2182)** and **FM Kush Bhagat (2245)** both spent much time for a Classical King’s Indian duel in which white soon moved ahead on the queenside, while black had a slower kingside attack coming up after 14... f5. In this case white failed to find a good plan on the queenside, while black’s kingside attack became all the more dangerous. White found a home for his king at h2, although black in the meantime won two pawns and following this was happy to force a queen exchange at move 37. Both players still were short of time with a complicated position on the board ...



38.Ng5 Re8?! 39.Bc4 b5? and now 40.Rd6! bxc4 41.Rxc6 still would have given white fair chances for a draw. Instead 40.Bf7? Rf8 41.Be6 Bf6 42.Nf7+ Kg7 43.g5 Rxf7! 44.Bxf7 Kxf7 45.gxf6 c4 gave black’s bishop and pawn armada a safe win against the white rook. 15 year old Bhagat is in for a very good result following this win, but an IM-norm still is not within reach.

**FM Raem Sherman (2390)** versus **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1905)** was another Sicilian Moscow duel, leading to an approximately balanced Maroczy Bind. White accepted the exchange of queens, one set of knights, light-squared bishops and one set of rooks, keeping after 23.Rxc6 a slight c-file initiative. Inviting further exchanges here was a mistake from black:



23.--- Nc5? works out well if white takes the knight, but Sherman understandably preferred a strong initiative with more pieces on the board after 24.Nb6! Rb8 25.Kf1 Ne6 26.Nd5. White within a few moves won black's b-pawn, and later had the endgame all under control due to his two connected queenside passed pawns.

**WIM Trisha Kanyamarala (2160)** versus **WGM Fiona Sieber (2264)** obviously was a key game for the best woman prize. White got the strong center she hoped for after 4.a3 in a Queen's Indian, although black after exchanging one set of knights had sufficient counterplay. The tempting 13.--- Nc6?! however here underestimated a strong pawn sacrifice;



14.d5! exd5 15.exd5 Rxd5 16.Ng5 Re5?! 17.Bxh7+ and white won back the pawn with a lasting attack. Black had to give up a pawn to exchange queens, and a tense struggle followed as white was a pawn up in a dynamic rook and minor pieces endgame. Sieber succeeded in activating her pieces and was in the game until stumbling into an elegant trap with a few minutes left on each clock:



32.--- Bb5? 33.c4+! Bxc4 34.Be4+ Kd6 35.Rxc4 and white due to her extra bishop had a safe endgame win. Trisha following this key win is the favourite for the best best woman prize, although one point no way is a safe lead with two games left for each player.

**Peder Marcus Aamodt (2126)** versus **CM Andreas Skotheim (2234)** was a positional Ruy Lopez duel, in which white had slightly the better structure after exchanging one set of knights and the light-squared bishops. White following this had some advantage when he offered further exchanges and a draw with 17.e5.

Dutch veteran **IM Gerard Welling (2206)** gave his good old Colle system another try as white against young English **CM Indy Southcott-Moyers (2143)**. White came ahead on the clock and for a while had a pair of bishops in the middle game, although black had structural compensation due to white's double f-pawn. Welling changed strategy as he exchanged the dark-squared bishop at c5 to disrupt black's queenside pawn structure, although the materially balanced endgame with queen and opposite-coloured bishops was drawn after 31 moves.



**Welling**



Harish

**CM Neeraj Harish (2024)** and **CM Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2205)** discussed an Italian opening in which black was fairly well satisfied after exchanging white's light-squared bishop for a knight at c2. Black came slightly better due to his bishops, and then exchanged one of them to pick up a white pawn at h4. White however had about enough activity for the pawn, and the game was agreed a draw after 38 moves in a balanced double-rook endgame. 14 year old Harish following this is out of the IM-norm run, although still in for a solid plus result.



Gaikwad

The Indian duel between **CM Soham Datar (2188)** and **FM Siddhant Gaikwad (2039)** somewhat exotic started up with an Evans gambit from the mid nineteenth century. The position before move 15 became even more interesting as black gave up his knight for three more pawns – and then invited white's queen to capture the rook at a8. White soon had to sacrifice the queen for black's second rook, leading after 20 minutes to a highly unbalanced position with two rooks, two bishops, one knight and four pawns against queen, two bishops and seven pawns. Black suddenly took the safe road as he immediately sacrificed one of the bishops to force a draw by perpetual check:

21.--- Bxg3+ 22.hxg3 Qxg3+ 23.Kh1 Qh4+  
24.Kg1 Qg3+ 25.Kh1 ½ - ½



The Norwegian teenager duel between **FM Sergey Eliseev (2276)** and **Pantham Kaewpittakun (2023)** saw a positionally complex Sicilian Najdorf duel in which black came ahead on the clock. Black also soon came ahead on the board, as white went for an overambitious knock out plan:



12.Ncxb5? axb5 13.Qxb5+ Nbd7 14.Qxb7 Qxb7 15.Bxb7 Rb8 16.fxe5? Ng4 17.Bc6 Nxe3 and black's extra knight soon proved more important than white's two pawns. Eliseev unfortunately did not feel in good shape, and withdrew from the tournament following this game.

**Olav Bjørkan (2022)** and **CM Akhilesh Nagare (2245)** discussed a positionally messy and tactically loaded King's Indian duel. Black for somewhat mysterious reasons gave up a pawn at a4. Computers considered white's position better after he took the pawn, although black had practical compensation in a position which was difficult to handle for both players. Black came clearly better after white either blundered or very dubiously sacrificed an exchange. Both players understandably ran short of time in a tactical position. White had less time plus a lost position, and black efficiently completed a winning attack before move 40.

**Advaitt Srikant Koduri (2162)** versus **Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (1960)** meanwhile saw a London System in which black by exchanging the bishops at g3 was helpful opening the h-file for white. Black put a pawn at h6, took over the center and appeared healthy after white at move 16 took a big decision and castled long.

20.--- e4? however was an instructive mistake, allowing black to start up a real kingside attack with 22.f4! and 24.f5. White following this soon had a winning attack, and well before 40 moves could double his rooks along the seventh rank with decisive effect.



**Koduri**



The game between **Sebastian Lien (1911)** and **IM Stephen Mannion (2142)** was a fairly sound and safe (read: boring) Queen's Gambit Accepted. White won back the pawn and happily accepted to exchange the c- and d-pawns plus all the more pieces. Draw agreed upon white's suggestion after 20 moves, in an almost symmetrical position with queen, two bishops, one knight and six pawns on each side.



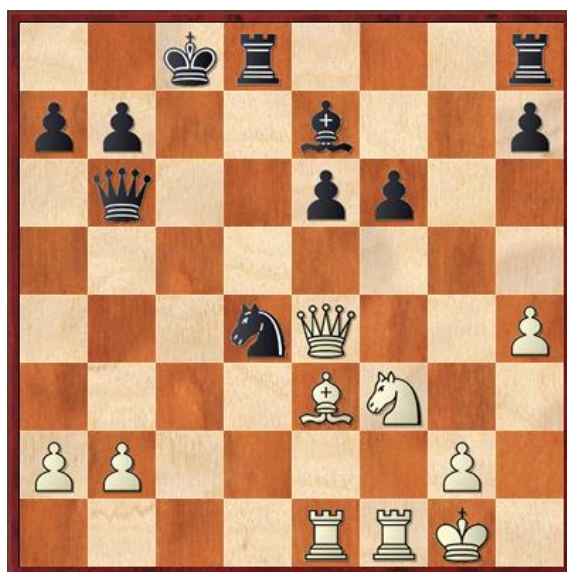
**Sørgerd**

**Jan Sørgerd (1966)** versus **Sigurd Kittilsen (1981)**

saw a much more ambitious Queen's Gambit Accepted with 3.--- a6 4.a4 e5!?.

White following 5.d5?! obviously underestimated the dangers of black's fast mobilization here, and black following an early queen exchange could keep an extra pawn with a big advantage. White never found any counterplay and became too helpful exchanging pieces. The double minor-pieces endgame after 30 moves following this was just winning for black, as he had a sound extra pawn plus a pair of bishops and a two versus one kingside pawn majority.

The young teenager duel between **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen (1930)** and **Even Huneide Hetland (1970)** started up as a French Advance with 6.Be2. Black first was fine after exchanging the light-squared bishops plus one set of knights, and castling long here was natural. Hetland soon afterwards however underestimated the dangers related to his king in the open c-file – while Simonsen was well aware of this:



21.--- Bc5? 22.Rc1! Ne2+ 23.Kf2 Nxc1 24.Rxc1 Kb8 25.Rxc5 Qxb2+ 26.Rc2 Qb1? 27.Rc8+! 1-0

Finally, **Aidas Juodziukynas (1917)** versus **Elias B. Rustan (1941)** was another duel between two talented Norwegian teenagers. They started up with a very Catalan-like Queen's Indian fianchetto, in which black had a healthy position after a thematic 15...c5 followed by exchange of the light-squared bishops. White later kept only a very slight structural advantage into the queen and rook endgame. But then black became so eager to exchange even more pieces, that he forgot a basic lesson about weak back ranks:



23... Rd8? 24.Qe5! Qa5 25.Rxd8+ Qxd8 26.Qxc5 and the extra pawn plus a big queenside majority gave white a winning advantage in the queen endgame. Rustan for a long while defended well and at move 38 had reached a borderline endgame with queen and three pawns against queen and two pawns – white's extra being a passed pawn at c5. Offering an exchange of queens however here was a very strange mistake from black, as the pawn endgame not unexpectedly soon turned out to be winning for white.

# Open Group



Gjersvik

In the **Open**, so far so good 17 year old **Håvard Eriksen Bech (1939)** today came under hard pressure in a turbulent black game against 12 year old **Aksel Elias Gjersvik (1693)**. Black true enough was better most of the middle game, and white's creative try with a knight sacrifice at move 33 first did not give nearly enough. Gjersvik however played very well while Bech suddenly lost his chess eyesight the next hour, and so black's king suddenly was in deep trouble even without queens on the board...



Bech



47.Nd7+ Kg8 48.Re8+ Kh7 49.g6+! fxg6 and now 50.Re7+! Kh6 51.Reg7 would lead to a mate at g6 within two more moves! Instead 50.Rxh8+? Kxh8 51.f7 Bb4 52.Rxg6 Kh7 53.f8Q Bxf8 54.Nxf8+ won a rook with a winning position. This endgame with a small armada of passed pawns for black however was still not easy to sort out for an exhausted young white player, and Gjersvik a few moves later accepted a draw in a still objectively won position. A draw here of course still as a very good result from this highly talented 12 year old – and an amazing turn from the position in the early middle game.

Second board duel between **Mikkel Damtoft Solbakken (1817)** and **Benjamin Spagnoli (1851)** became rather short and one-way driven following an early blackout from the also highly talented white player:



11.f3?? Ne3+ 12.Ke2 Nxc2 13.Rb1 Nd4+ and black soon afterwards reached a won rooks and knight endgame with two extra pawns.

Third board duel between **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1806)** and **Mathias Nesheim (1981)** on the other hand was a long and tight endgame, finally decided as black in the sixth hour succeeded in winning a very unusual endgame with queen against rook, knight and pawn! White had been clearly better in the opening and a pawn up from the start of the rook and knight endgame. Worse still was the finish, as black had the draw within short reach very few moves before the end:



White already had put his king at g7 several times and the game was expected soon to end up a draw by repetition, but then white moved too fast and carelessly:

69.Kg8?? Qxg6+ 70.Rg7 Qe6+ 71.Kh7 Kf8 72.Kh8? Qf6 0-1

Fourth board saw 18 year old **Nikolai Olsen Wernberg (1906)** hitting back with a convincing material win as black against his 16 year old Tromsø teammate **Jakob Sælen Høifødt (1722)**, while 15 year old **Edvard Reinertsen (1783)** on the fifth board won by a nice attack as black against 58 year old **Tom Eriksen (1741)**. Few draws but no senational winners seen on the lower boards this round (too).

Bech following this a bit luckily kept his unshared lead, now at 6,0/7 and half a point ahead of Benjamin Spagnoli. Third place at 5,0 is shared between Nesheim, Wernberg, Solbakken, Reinertsen and Gjersvik. The top three prize winners for sure can be found among these seven players, since there remarkably enough is no player at 4,5/7 in this group.

The top board in round 8 will see another key game, as second rated Bech now will be black against first rated Nesheim, while Spagnoli on the second board will get the white pieces against Reinertsen.



Solbakken



Kuzmenko



Rynning

---

Photos by IA Monica Lauvik Fjeldstad