

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2024

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT 2



GM Group

Among the highest rated players, second-rated GM Rinat Jumabayev of Kazakshstan, fourth-rated GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly of India and sixth-rated Ido Gorshtein of Israel all can be found among the remaining players at 2/2, following long working-day wins in their second games. Second-rated GM Krishnan Sasikiran however failed to win a promising white position today.

The top Norwegians, fifth-rated IM Elham Amar and seventh-rated GM Frode Urkedal, also slowed down following shaky draws today. First-rated GM Abhimanyu Puranik had his second shrinking draw from a dubious position against a much lower-rated opponent, and more or less sensationally can be found down in the crowd at 1,0/2.

On the other hand the tournament got some true positive sensations today: The 17 year old Norwegian IM-candidate Saad Elmi is among the eleven players at 2/2 as he today defeated GM Tiger Hillarp, and around the same time WFM Shivika Rohilla won on time in a drawish endgame against GM Praneeth Vuppala. A notable surprise on the lower boards was 16 year old WCM Anishka Vikram winning well deserved as black against FM Vegard Koi Gandrud, and many of the young female players from India have made a very promising start. Second round overall became a long and hard-fought one: Eight games were still running after five and a half hours – and three of them still continued after six hours.

On the first board, Greek **IM Stavroula Tsolakidou (2424)** and Kazakhstani **GM Rinat Jumabayev (2598)** today started up with a relatively rare Sicilian Najdorf line in which black plays a slightly provocative 8... Qb6 followed by 9... Qc7. Castling long to start a pawn storm on the kingside probably was overambitious from a white point of view, as black could soon force an endgame and keep a lasting advantage due to his pair of bishops. During mutual time pressure before move 40, black picked up a pawn to reach



an endgame with rook, bishop and three pawns against rook, knight and two pawns. Material was strongly reduced but scattered pawns and less active pieces made this endgame very difficult from a white point of view. Tsolakidou respectfully stopped the clock after 65 moves as her final pawn was about to fall, leaving a won but not trivial endgame with rook, bishop and two connected passed pawns against rook and knight.

Third-rated **GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2578)** as white in a French Winawer against the young Turk **IM Hasan Huseyin Celik (2417)** made an aggressive start with 7.h4 and 8.h5. Black reportedly first was fine after forcing an exchange of his troublesome light-squared bishop for the white colleague at b5. White still kept a slight initiative, developing into a dangerous kingside attack following a too weakening 22... g5?! Celik's decision to sacrifice a knight for two pawns at e5 in this situation was dubious from a theoretical point of view,



Sasikiran

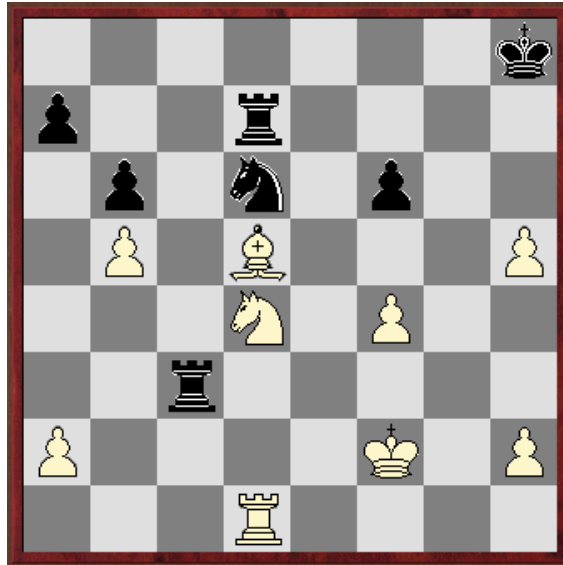
but still gave him some practical chances. Sasikiran for a long time played well but missed something important as he had only seconds left on the clock after 35 moves. Black following this could cash in a third pawn. After the first time control he soon reached a drawn endgame with rook and four pawns versus rook, bishop and one pawn.

Veteran **GM Stellan Brynell (2406)** as white against **GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly (2574)** went for a solid line of a Queen's Gambit Declined, allowing two sets of minor pieces plus the c- and d-pawns to be exchanged within the first 15 moves. Black following this had no problems from the opening, but white was ahead on the clock with a very safe position. As black tried to unbalance the position, white first got some initiative around move 24-27. 28.Rxd5? however was a too loose exchange sacrifice. White first had two pawns for the exchange, but his



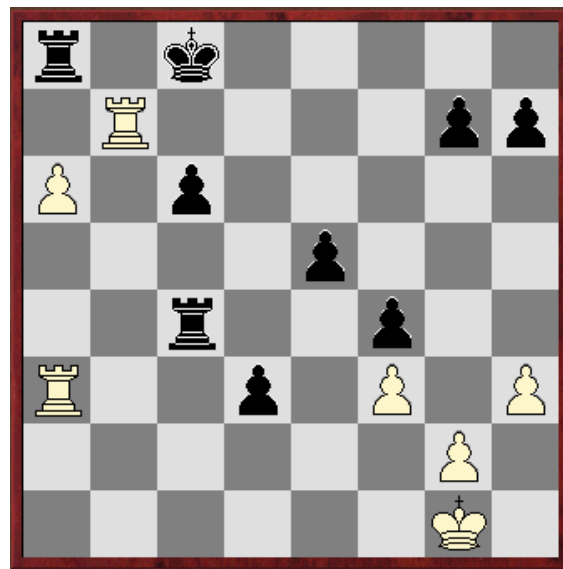
Brynell vs Ganguly

weakened pawn structure gave black the easier position to play with two rooks and knight versus rook, bishop and knight. As white despite his speedy start ran seriously short of time for the first time control, black decided by a nice pseudo-sacrifice:



38.--- Nxb5! 39.Nxb5 Rc5 40.Nxa7 Rcx5 and black soon won.

The Norwegian junior duel between **IM Elham Amar (2567)** and **IM Jens E. Ingebretsen (2402)** saw a rare line of the Sicilian Alapin, leaving white with a backward pawn at d2 and some problems to develop. Black castled long and spent some time from the opening, while white castled short and played rather fast. The position later was in rough balance for three hours, but black although short of time was closer to something in the double rook endgame.



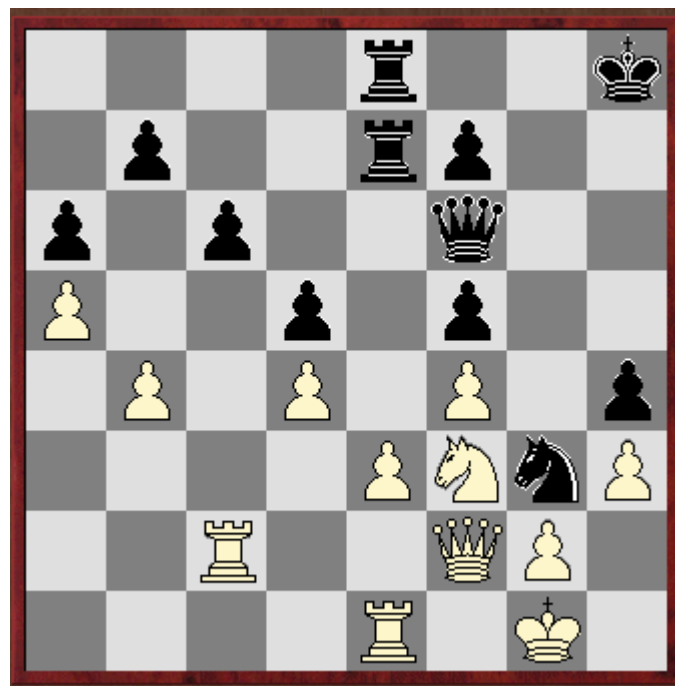
35.Rxd3 and now 35.--- Rd4! intending 36.Rc3 Rxa6 could have given white some problems. Instead 35.--- Rxa6?! 36.Rdd7 Ra1+ 37.Kh2 Rcc1 38.Rdc7+ was agreed a draw immediately, as white now had perpetual checks along the seventh rank.

The Estonian attacking queen **IM Mai Narva (2399)** as white against **GM Ido Gorshtein (2539)** of course took a brave approach, first entering a Sicilian Najdorf duel and then starting up the double edged Lipnitsky attack with 9.g4!? followed by a tactical 12.Nd5!?. Black did not take the first knight, but 13.Nf5?! was overdoing it, as the evolutions soon turned in favour of black. The GM in short now took the piece for a pawn and patiently exchanged it all down to a won endgame with rook, knight and three pawns against rook and four pawns.



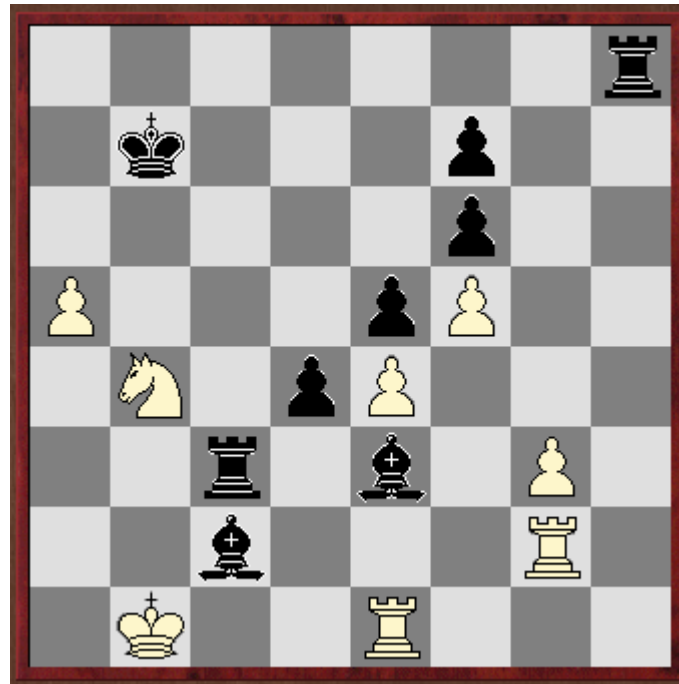
Narva vs Gorshtein

GM Frode Urkedal (2536) as white against **IM Sambit Panda (2377)** in a Queen's Gambit Exchange played fast and confident, putting his knight at e2. Panda spent much more time, but after exchanging the dark-squared bishops he apparently had a solid position on the board after 14 moves. White later played f3, but proved unable to realize the powerful e4 center break. Black came slightly better as white instead felt forced to play f4. A short comedy of errors followed at move 34, when white had 22 minutes and black one minute left on the clock:



34.Kh2? now was a serious blunder, allowing black a hard tactical hit with 34... Rxe3! Black went for the more positional 34... Rg8?, leading back to an approximately balanced position which was drawn by a repetition within a few moves after the first time control.

IM Sebastian Mihajlov (2373) and **GM Kaido Kulaots (2534)** meanwhile discussed a Sicilian Richter-Rauzer line in which white castled long to go for a kingside attack. White came more than half an hour ahead on the clock and obviously had the better preparation for this double-edged position. Black after 14 moves had also castled long, but white due to his more active pieces and d-file pressure was better despite black's pair of bishops. The GM later spent much time, but succeeded gradually in activating his bishops, while the IM played too fast and failed to find any active plan. White following this anyway was in deep trouble when he blundered decisive material during his opponent's time trouble:



38.Rxc2? Rb3+! 39.Rb2 Rxb2+ 40.Kxb2 Bd2 41.Rb1 Bxb4 42.Kc2 Rc8 0-1

GM Raja Rithvik R (2532) versus **IM Moksh Amit Doshi (2353)** formally was a closed Ruy Lopez opening, but the position became very open as one set of knights plus all the center pawns were exchanged within the first 16 moves. A steam of exchanges after 30 moves left a rook endgame with an initiative for white. Black gave up a pawn to keep his rook active, and after the first time control had no problems demonstrating the draw with rook, h-pawn versus rook, a-pawn and g-pawn.

FM Theodor Kenneskog (2358) and **GM Pranav Anand (2519)** discussed a well-known line of the Sicilian Najdorf, in which white castles long and black short. White and his pair of bishops were reported slightly better on the board after 16 moves, while black was some 20 minutes ahead on the clock. A tense struggle followed: White first had the best chances and black then was better around move 35-39 according to the computers, but the position was always difficult to handle for both players.



Kenneskog vs Anand

The young GM here played too fast when his opponent ran short of time, and 39... dxc5? was a dangerous mistake as white after a tactical 40.d6! > Qxd6?! 41.Bxf5! suddenly had strong pressure. The position remained messy and tense after the time control and both players spent much time for the next few moves.



Now the ice-cold 43.Nxc5! Qa2+ 44.Kc1 Re8 45.Be6 reportedly could have given white a won position. Instead 43.Nc1?? Qxd7 44.Bxe5 would have turned the position in favour of black if he had played the fairly natural 44... Rxe5! Black went for 44... Rab8? 45.Bxh8 Nd3+, which gave the advantage back to white. 46.Ka1?? Nxe1 47.Bb2 Nxf3 however was a final blunder which soon decided an extremely complex and messy game in favour of the GM.

Dane **FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2351)** first came slightly ahead on the board and clock as white in some delayed exchange line of a Slav opening against Turkish **IM Isik Can (2493)**. As white castled long to go for a pawn storm on the kingside, black however got some chances for a counterattack on the queenside. A roughly balanced struggle continued for the next three hours.

After the first time control the position appeared very drawish, but black had the easier position to play with rook, bishop and two pawns against rook, knight and two pawns.

As black's f-pawn was about to become a threat, Nielsen pulled the emergency brake by sacrificing his knight for black's remaining pawns. Can after winning white's final pawn of course played on with rook and bishop versus rook, but Nielsen defended this well-known endgame fairly confidently and got his well-deserved draw after 105 moves.



Nielsen

IM Ludvig Carlsson (2350) versus **IM Ameet Ghasi (2485)** was a rather positional King's Indian duel, in which white after the usually tame exchange with 9.dxe5 dxe5 first got a slight pull due to his rook on d1 and knight of d5. Carlsson played very fast and was obviously still inside a preparation after 12 moves. Well ahead on the clock, white pushed his luck too far when sacrificing an exchange at d6 after 25 moves. Ghasi efficiently took the exchange, pushed forward his own passed c-pawn to exchange it for the white d6-pawn, and after 33 moves had reached a won endgame with an extra exchange. Carlsson following this anyway was lost when blundering a mate just before move 40.



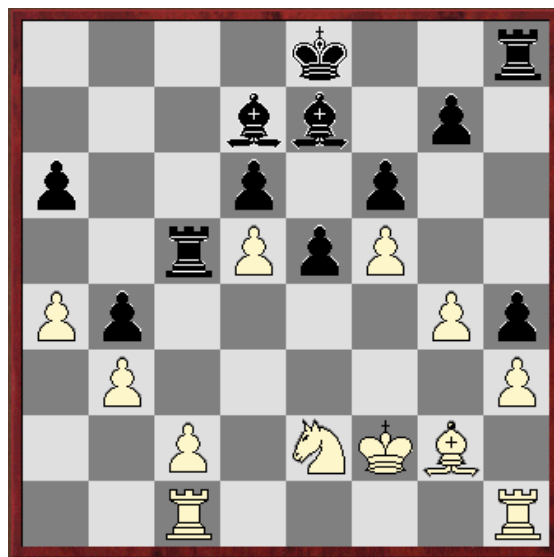
Carlsson vs Ghasi

The teenager duel between Israeli **IM Yahli Sokolovsky (2475)** and Norwegian **FM Håvard Haug (2341)** started up as a Caro-Kann Tarkower line with an early Nxf6+, leaving black with a slightly inferior pawn structure. Sokolovsky without any doubts castled long and had some advantage due to his space and better structure. Black after 27 moves was not without chances for a draw with two rooks, knight and six pawns against two rooks, bishop and six pawns, but white had all the possibilities here. Haug tried to walk on the



wire into a borderline pawn endgame, leading to a borderline queen endgame with an extra pawn for white. Black however strangely gave up a key pawn on the kingside at the start of this queen endgame, and white later had few problems to complete the win.

FM Saad Elmi (2344) as white against **GM Tiger Hillarp (2473)** tested out a Modern Sicilian line with 6.h3. Both players obviously knew this very well, and rushed through the first 15 moves. White then made a slightly strange decision to put his king at f2 instead of castling short. Black following this had the better position for some moves, but in turn came up with a very strange king move:



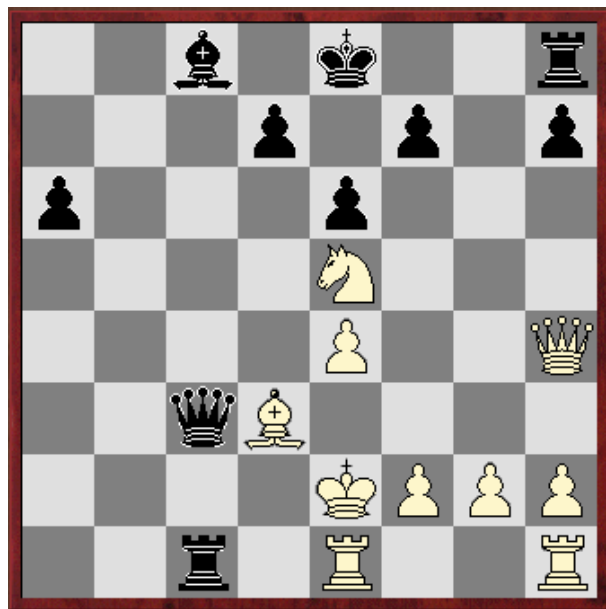
25.c3 and now the natural 25... bxc3 would have been about equal, with some possibilities for both players. Instead 25... Kf7? 26.cxb4 Rxc1 27.Rxc1 Rb8 28.Rc4 won a key queenside pawn for white. Elmi went on to win the isolated black pawn at a6 a few moves later on, and following this surprising win he has had a very promising start on this week's search for his third IM norm.

The young Norwegian duel between **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2336)** and **IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2454)** saw a Trompovsky opening in which white at move 4 gave up his bishop for knight at f6, leaving black with two bishops and the slightly inferior pawn structure. Black apparently had few worries about the pawns and after 16 moves had centralized all his pieces. Black within move 20-30 built up a powerful attack against the weakened white kingside. White escaped dangers of a direct mate as he got the chance to force tactical exchanges. Black after the first time control still had a close to winning endgame with bishop, knight and five pawns versus bishop, knight and four pawns. Opposite-coloured bishops gave white some hope, but it was still difficult as black had a passed c-pawn plus the more active king. The game lasted 78 moves and six hours, but for the last hour or so black was two pawns up with a fairly safe win.



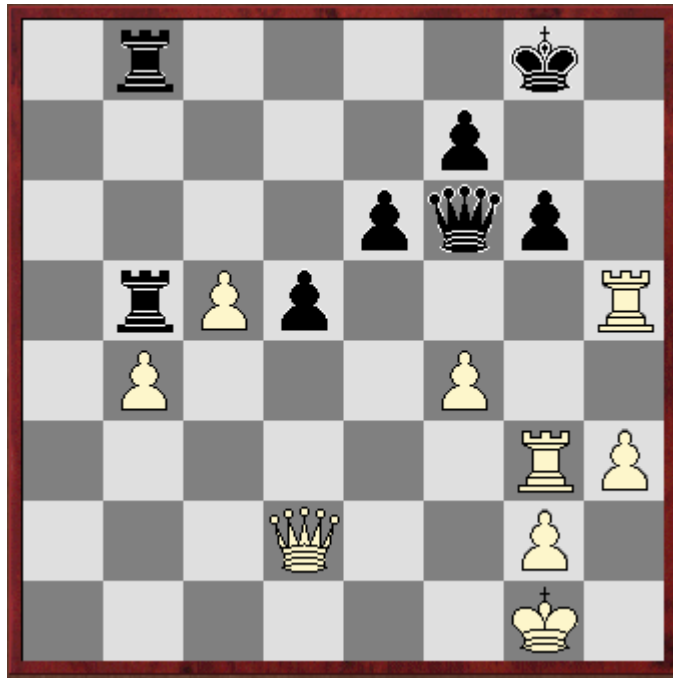
Vestby-Ellingsen vs Kvaløy

IM Dushyant Sharma (2331) versus **IM Nico Chasin (2447)** was a Sicilian Taimanov duel, but still within the first nine moves the players left theory. White apparently confused himself and spent almost one hour for his first 11 moves. The position turned tactical soon afterwards, as black entered complications winning three queenside pawns for a knight. A short comedy of errors followed at move 22-23:



Now 22.--- Rxe1+! 23.Rxe1 Qb2+ 24.Kf3 Qxe5 was a straightforward way to win back the knight. Black instead went for 22.--- Qb2+??, offering white to keep the material with 23.Kf3! since 23.--- Rxe1 24.Qf6! now would win for white. White helpfully chose to transpose with 23.Ke3 Rxe1 24.Rxe1 Qxe5, leading to a balanced position which was drawn a few moves later on.

IM Jonah Willow (2446) and **IM Helge A Nordahl (2330)** discussed another Caro-Kann with 3... c5?! In this one white greedily snatched a pawn at c5 and protected it with 8.b4, leaving black with some compensation as white's pawn at e5 was a bit weak. White eventually had to give back the pawn, and so the players after 20 moves had reached an approximately balanced position with queen, two rooks, one minor piece and seven pawns on each side. White however kept a slight pressure after getting the chance to exchange his bishop for the black knight at f5. This tense IM duel was decided during mutual time pressure just before the first time control:



37.f5!? exf5 38.Qxd5 reportedly still was acceptable for black, but now 38... f4? was a decisive blunder as white immediately demonstrated 39.Rxg6+! Qxg6 40.Rg5 Qxg5 41.Qxg5+ Kf8 42.Qh6+ Kg8 43.c6 Rxb4 44.c7 1-0

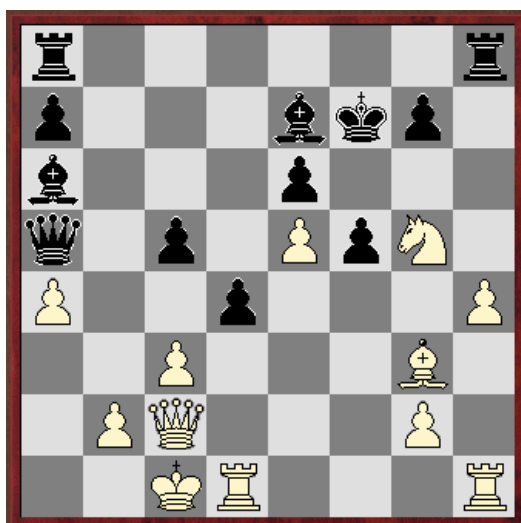
FM Nicolai Kistrup (2324) versus **IM Edvin Trost (2432)** was a Caro-Kann Advance in which one set of knights and the dark-squared bishops were exchanged within the first 13 moves, leaving white slightly ahead on the board and black slightly ahead on the clock. Black took over the initiative during the next moves, but white was still well inside the ring until he at move 17 castled long into a much too open queenside. White came up with some counterplay on the kingside, but black had the more dangerous attack and went on to win before 30 moves.

FM Roy Vagman (2311) versus **IM Linus Johansson (2427)** was the first short draw of this tournament, agreed after 12 moves following a well-known repetition in the French Advance opening.



Nandhidhaa vs Puranik

GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2618) as white against **WGM Pallathur Nandhidhaa (2305)** entered a French Tarrasch line considered fairly healthy for black. After 17 moves here black's king at f7 looked slightly awkward, but black's pair of bishops and center pawns still gave her an edge – at least according to the computers. This game in short did nothing to improve the dubious reputation of this line for white: Puranik after castling long soon realized that his king at c1 would remain more open than black's king at f7, and his best decision in this game might have been to offer a draw after 24.Ng5+?!



Black probably realized that she would have had the better position after the given 24.--- Bxg5 25.hxg5, but a draw of course was tempting as material still was equal and black still had no obvious way forward. Puranik will have a long road to repeat his outstanding 7.5/9 from last year following two draws from dubious positions in round 1 and 2, while Nandhidhaa at 1,5/2 has made a splendid start.

GM Erik Blomqvist (2511) and **FM Shazil Shehzad (2301)** discussed a good old Morphy line of the Ruy Lopez, leaving a fairly balanced position after exchanging one set of knights plus the light-squared bishops.

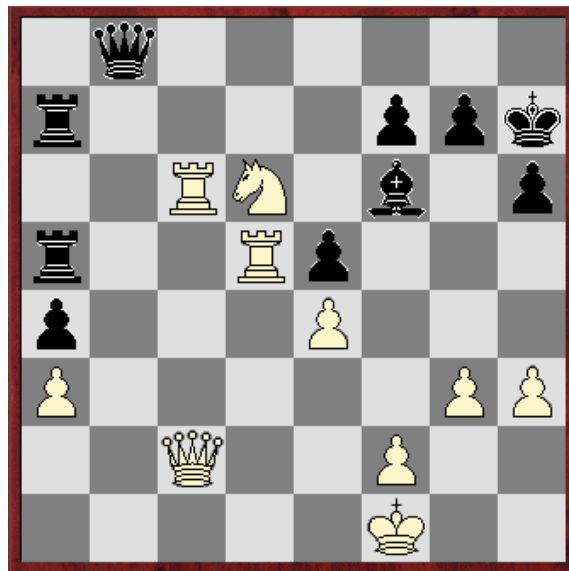
Blomqvist due to his double b-pawn had the slightly inferior pawn structure, but still appeared satisfied to be some 25 minutes ahead with a slight c- and d-file initiative on the board after 19 moves.

Black for a while came up with enough counterplay to balance the chances, but white had the more active pieces and reached a won position as he after 35 moves intervened at d6 with his knight. The game had a dramatic finish during mutual time pressure:



Shehzad vs Blomqvist

36.Nxf7? actually was a serious mistake as black after an alert 36.--- Qb3! was back in the game.



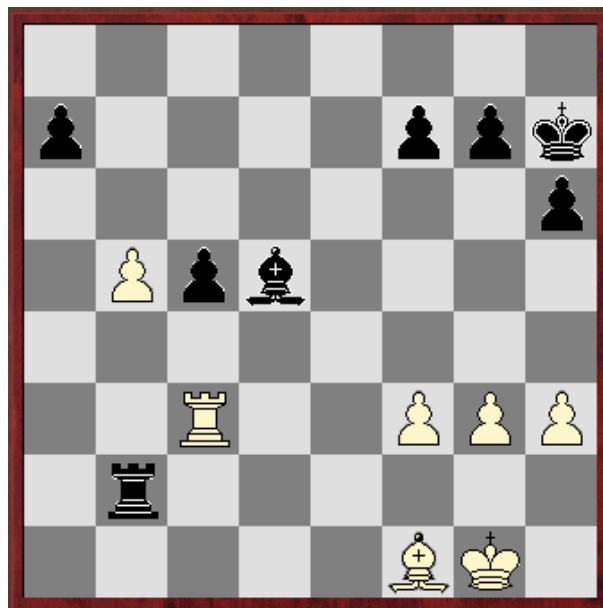
After 37.Nd6 black however in turn blundered with 37.--- Qxa3?? allowing a neon light flashing 38.Nc4! with a decisive material plus for white. Black stopped the clock after 38.--- Qa1+?! 39.Rd1, realizing that he had trapped his own queen in the corner.

The Indian duel between **WFM Shivika Rohilla (2003)** and **GM Prraneeth Vuppala (2506)** started up with a Reti opening, but soon left theory as black after five moves had exchanged his key pawn at e5 for the white pawn at b4. Black continued in an original style, exchanging his dark-squared bishop for a knight at a3 soon after the opening. White following this was some 20 minutes ahead on the clock and slightly better on the board after 13 moves.



Rohilla vs Vuppala

This was one of the many cases in which white probably should have kept the initiative instead of winning a pawn, as black after 19.Nxd4? soon came up with enough counterplay to balance the chances. During mutual time pressure the position slowed down as black won back the pawn, and the endgame with rook, bishop and four pawns on each side appeared very drawish after 37 moves. That was however until the GM at move 38 somehow forgot the clock and lost on time!



Whatever circumstances, the outcome with a WFM around 2000 defeating a GM around 2500 of course qualified as a full sensation and 16 year old Rohilla following this has had a fantastic start on her search for a WIM norm.

GM Momchil Petkov (2500) today went for 1.d4 as white against **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2215)**, who in turn replied with a Semi-Tarrasch line of a Queen's Gambit. White soon pushed his e-pawn forward to e5, but black reportedly had enough counterplay after exchanging his dark-squared bishop for a knight at d4. Kreken in an inspired mood had first a slight initiative and then the better pawn structure, although Petkov was never in serious danger of losing. The players well before 40 moves reached the classical and still dead-drawn endgame with rook and three kingside pawns against rook and three kingside pawns.

IM Semen Mitusov (2487) versus **Aniruddh Chatterjee (2182)** was a main line Caro-Kann, turning dangerous for both as white castled long and started a loose pawn storm on the kingside. White sacrificed a pawn at g4, but black returned the pawn at e6, after which a queen exchange left an approximately balanced position with two rooks, bishop, knight and five pawns on each side.

Black at move 26 strangely misplaced his bishop at h4, allowing white to get a strong initiative in the rooks and bishop endgame by help of a tactical 28.d5! White in turn played

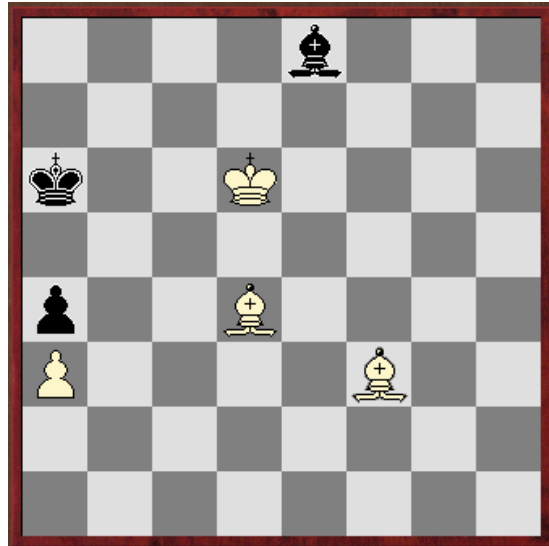
too slowly for the next few moves and had to exchange the passed d-pawn, after which the players at move 39 agreed a draw in a truly drawish double-rook endgame.



Mitusov vs Chatterjee

IM Tobias Kölle (2460) and **CM Akshit Kumar J (2172)** entered a rare London System line in which all the bishops were exchanged off early, leaving black with an h-file after castling long. White probably could be fairly well satisfied after 18 moves, as he was some 40 minutes ahead on the clock with a slight initiative on the board. Black's pinned all his hopes on counterplay in the h-file, and the position soon collapsed as he much too easy gave up his key pawn at e6. Kölle was a very efficient German chess master in this game and before 30 moves had decided the game by a seventh rank intervention.

50 year old **IM Frode Elsness (2437)** as white against 15 year old **Indy Soutchcott-Moyers (2120)** started up with 1.Nf3 and then transposed into some kind of Grünfeld in Advance. Following an early queen exchange black had the slightly better pawn structure, but white much due to his fianchetto bishop at g2 kept a slight pressure. After 20 moves black had given up his structural advantage, and white kept an edge due to his pair of bishops. The position somehow remained stable for a long time, as white 60 moves later on still kept a slight pressure only due to his pair of bishops. The situation now was a minor piece endgame with two bishops and two pawns against bishop, knight and two pawns. Taking into account the low number of pawns, this for sure somehow somewhere should have been a draw. Elsness however had his bishops and of course saw no reason not to play on under mutual time pressure. He was rewarded as his young opponent lost the defensive line in the sixth hour and just before 100 moves gave up his kingside pawn. Black's plan turned out to be sacrificing his knight for white's passed f-pawn, to reach a fortress draw with pawn at a4 and light squared-bishop against pawn at a3 and two bishops. His clever point was that white could never take the a4-pawn with his bishop, as an exchange of the light-squared bishops would leave a drawn position with a-pawn and dark squared bishop for white. Elsness after 6.5 hours however successfully demonstrated that this original position was in fact a win for him, as white had a direct attack against the black king.



110.Kc7! Ka5 111.Kb7 threatening 112.Be2 followed by 113.Bc3/Bb6 mate. Southcott-Moyers as a desperate last try went for 111... Bc6+, but resigned as white took with the king instead of the bishop.



Elsness vs Southcott-Moyers (front) and Sørensen vs Øksendal (back)

IM Hampus Sörensen (2428) and **Martin Øksendal (2086)** entered a Queen's Gambit Exchange line in which all the bishops and one set of knights left early. White after 17 moves held a slight initiative in a classical position with hanging black pawns at d5 and c5. Play soon afterwards continued into an isolated pawn position, and white here kept a very slight edge via the queen and knight endgame all into the knight endgame. Øksendal however defended very well, creatively sacrificing a pawn to activate his king and win back the pawn. The IM continued to play even with three kingside pawns against three kingside pawns, but of course never got the help needed to create winning chances.

CM Andreas Skotheim (2214) as white in a Sicilian against **IM Mohapatra Sidhant (2379)** left theory for a solid closed fianchetto with 2.Nc3 and 3.g3. This gave black no challenges with his development. After 20 moves all the bishops and one set of knights were exchanged in this game too, leaving black with a slight initiative.

After 30 moves the rooks too had left the party, and the remaining position with queen, knight and five pawns on each side appeared drawish. 38.Nb1? however was a mistake as black now suddenly could exchange off the queens at c4 and reach a winning knight endgame.



Skotheim vs Sidhant

IM Ameya Audi (2378) and **Harry Zheng (2077)** a few hours earlier on entered a well known Catalan line in which white wins back the pawn at c4, while black gets the time needed to develop his troublesome light-squared bishop via b7 to e4. Chances later were close to balanced on the board, although white after 23 moves was nearly 40 minutes ahead on the clock. White gradually built up a strong pressure but first released it as he allowed a tactical 28... Nc6!, forcing a knight exchange that relieved black's position a lot. Following this the endgame with queen, bishop, knight and five pawns on each side after 34 moves appeared drawish. White however still had the much easier position to play, and black anyway was in trouble when he at move 38 blundered a piece and resigned.

The junior duel between Norwegian **Peder Marcus Aamodt (1941)** and Israeli **FM Yuval Yaniv (2368)** saw a rare Lasker-Pelikan line of a Sicilian, in which the pair of bishops gave black a pleasant plus after 15 moves. White's try to sacrifice an exchange with 21.Rxd4?! did not help much as black kept an attack, and after 29 moves Yaniv could complete the game with a mate.

Sondre Stai (1842) as white in a French against **FM Gunnar Lund (2335)** went for a modest 2.d3, reaching a typical King's Indian Advance position. White due to his e5-pawn had a space advantage on the kingside, while black had more space and some attacking chances on the queenside. White more or less in desperation gave up two knights but still failed to come up with anything dangerous against black's king, hence black in the final position after 33 moves was two pieces up with the safer king.

Gokul Thangavel (1990) versus **IM Erik Hedman (2311)** was a rare Nimzo-Indian line with 4.Nf3, in which a tactical queen exchange left white with the pair of bishops before 20 moves. Black due to his active knight and better pawn structure still had an edge with two rooks, bishop, knight and six pawns against two rooks, two bishops and six pawns. Hedman after 25 moves succeeded in winning the isolated with pawn at c4 by help of a tactical trick. The remaining endgame with rook, bishop and six pawns against rook, bishop and five pawns due to the opposite-coloured bishops was no obvious win. Black however had all the fun here and the IM instructively activated his king to win a second and decisive pawn after the first time control.

FM Vegar Koi Gandrud (2293) versus **WCM Anishka Vikram (1995)** started up as a closed Catalan, which however soon became rather open-minded. White won an exchange as he was allowed to play 14.Ba3 followed by 16.Bxf8, but black was equal if not better as she got two pawns including a passed pawn at b3 – plus a promising light-square dominance. Later the player around 2000 had the easier position to play and just played it better than the player around 2300. Black's pieces gradually improved their positions while white failed to come up with anything disturbing against the black king. During mutual time pressure, black picked up even more white pawns until her passed b-pawn after 40 moves was ready for promotion.

Ask Amundsen (2069) and **Sondre Melaa (2285)** know each other too well from many earlier tournaments, and today discussed some kind of King's Indian double fianchetto. Black after exchanging a bishop at g2 and a knight at f3 reached a sound position with a slightly better pawns structure, although white with a strong knight at c5 was reported slightly better. White in the fourth hour had some initiative, but in the end just before 40 moves found nothing better than a draw by repetition.

FM Daakshin Arun (2283) snatched a pawn at b7 as white in a Slav against **Per Fredrik Holand (2068)**, and successfully kept the pawn with some advantage. White following this after 25 moves was a sound pawn up with queen, rook, knight and six pawns against queen, rook, knight and five pawns. As white now also had a better structure with pressure against black's isolated pawn at d5, he was close to winning. Black in a difficult position became too helpful to exchange his remaining pieces, hence white after the time control had reached a queen endgame in which his passed pawns decided.

Victor Lilliehöök (2060) and **FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2277)** entered a somewhat French-like Sicilian in which the center was blown up within the first 15 moves, leaving black with a pleasant plus due to his pair of bishops and powerful fianchetto bishop at g7. Lilliehöök had a solid position with no obviously weak pawns, but still had an uphill struggle with almost one hour less on the clock. The eleven year old white player for a long time defended well, and after 35 moves had rook, knight and four pawns against rook, bishop and four pawns. Al-Tarboush in the fifth hour was about 90 minutes ahead on the clock, and apparently had good practical winning chances as he succeeded in winning a pawn. Although having only two minutes left on the clock, Lilliehöök continued to defend very well and found his way to save a not trivial rook versus rook and pawn endgame.



Lilliehöök vs Al-Tarboush

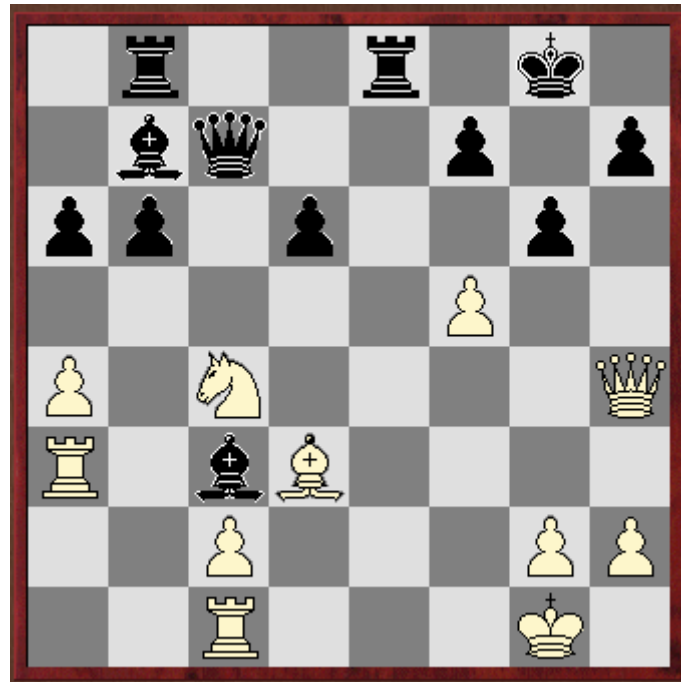
FM Ritvik Krishnan (2277) and **Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (2035)** started up with an accelerated Sicilian and soon reached a Maroczy bind under terms slightly favourable for white. Both players spent much time while black left his king at e8 to start a pawn storm on the kingside before move 20. White's pair of bishops around that time gave him the easier position to play, although black had a maximum centralized queen at e5 and a sound knight at e6. As the position opened, white before and just after move 40 held an initiative which should have been decisive, as black's king at e7 was much more vulnerable than his white colleague at h1. White however played it too slowly, allowing black to create a lot of counterplay simply by pushing forward his passed c-pawn in the fifth hour. White in the end succeeded in eliminating the passed pawn and in the sixth hour was 1-2 pawns up, but still had a hard time to win due to his weakened pawn structure and black's now active queen and rook.



Krishnan vs Evenshaug

Evenshaug defended stubbornly and despite two extra pawns it was remarkably difficult for white to make progress in the rook and minor piece endgame. During mutual time pressure black around move 90 succeeded in exchanging off the final pawns, leaving only a lone rook and king for each player.

CM Joel Paul Ganta (1993) versus **FM James Moreby (2260)** was a rather unusual Sicilian Najdorf position in which black kept his pawn at e7 instead of moving it forward to e6 or e5. f4 followed by e5 here was overambitious from a white point of view, and black came better due to his active knights at c5 and d5. As white felt forced to get rid of the knights, black instead got two active bishops and an extra pawn. Moreby in an inspired mood after 25 moves won an exchange with a rather unusual tactical motif:



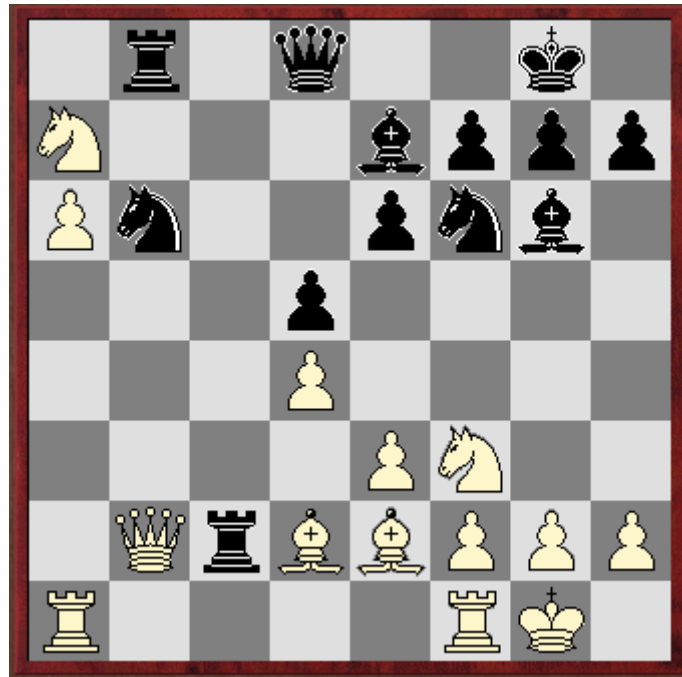
25.--- Bb2! 26.fxg6 fxg6 27.Nxb2 Qc5+ 28.Kh1 Qxa3. Black later gave back the exchange to reach a safely won minor piece endgame.

FM Fredrik Lindh (2256) as white in a French Winawer against 34 year younger **WCM Sachi Jain (1992)** went for a rare and positional line with 5.Bd2 Ne7 6.Nb5. Having exchanged the dark-squared bishops, white later kept a sound edge as his knight on d4 was superior to black's bishop at d7. Black later came up with some counterplay against the backward white pawn at c3, but white due to his extra space and superior minor piece still was much better in the rooks and minor piece endgame after the first time control. Lindh in the fifth hour safely decided the game by opening the kingside for his king and passed h-pawn, while black's bishop at d7 remained a lame duck until the bitter end.



Lindh vs Jain

Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1985) versus **FM Casper Dahl Rasmussen (2244)** was a Slav in which black first appeared perfectly healthy. The position became more double-edged as white at move 17-19 moved his pawn from a2 to a6, but chances remained about in balance. 20.--- Nb6? however was an outright blunder as white's knight at b5 was no longer in a pin, hence he could win a key black defensive pawn with 21.Nxa7.



But after 21.---Rc2 white should have given up the queen with 22.Qxc2! Bxc2 23.Nc6 Qf8 24.Nxb8 Qxb8 25.Rfc1, as the careful 22.Qb5?! Qc7 23.Bd3 Rxd2 24.Nxd2 Qxa7 was much less clear. White after the first time control played on for a win with rook and passed pawn against two knights in the endgame, but early in the sixth hour had to accept a draw with rook and two kingside pawns against knight and three kingside pawns.

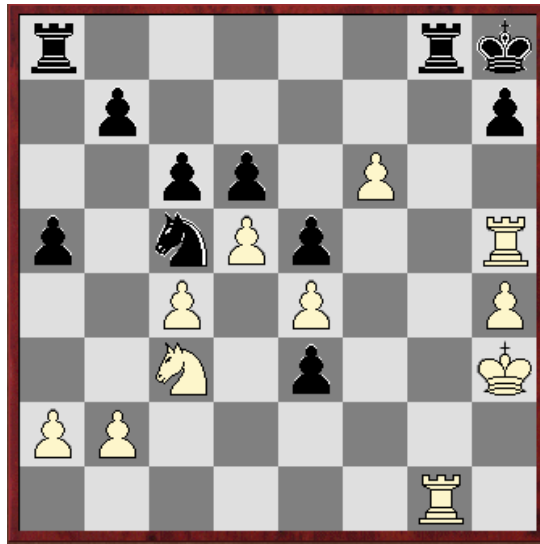


Brattgjerd vs Kaewpitakkun

Brattgjerd in an inspired mood smashed through on the kingside to win decisive material before move 30.

Isak Vinh Brattgjerd (2228) as white in a Norwegian teenager duel against **Pantham Kaewpitakkun (1989)** went for a modest 3.Bb5+ in a Sicilian, and after exchanging the light-squared bishops white got some space advantage. White's advantage increased as black allowed a tactical 20.Nxd5, winning a pawn with a much better position for white.

Morten Andersen (2178) versus **WIM Ioulia Makka (1983)** was a Bogó-Indian fianchetto opening line, in which white played d5 and e4 with a space advantage. White's advantage increased as he later played 17.f4 followed by 18.f5. After 25 moves all minor pieces except for one set of knights were exchanged, but white kept chances for a kingside attack while black apparently had no real counterplay. Andersen however chose the wrong plan to open up the kingside, allowing a tactical queen exchange leading to a double-edged rooks and knight endgame.



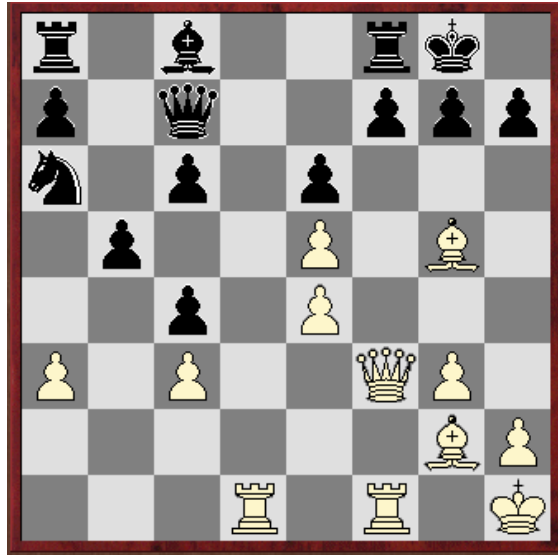
Then 34.Re1? was a blunder, as Makka could (and did) play 34... Nd3!, winning an exchange and later the game after 35.f7 Rgf8 36.Rxe3 Nf4+ 37.Kg4 Nxh5.

Rishi Vijayakumar (2156) versus **Rion Okuno (1981)** was a fairly sound game, drawn after 27 moves with no real winning chances for any of the players. The opening was a Queen's Gambit Ragozin line, in which the players before 20 moves had exchanged down to a drawish and rather closed position with two rooks, one knight and seven pawns on each side. Curiously, this was the first draw ever recorded by a Panama player in a Fagernes tournament.

CM John Stark (1947) of New Zealand and **Evsuld Mygmarsuren (2138)** of Norway today tested out a very greedy Slav line, in which black first played Be6-b5-Bc8 to hang on his extra c-pawn – and then snatched white's pawn at d4 with his queen. It was too much, as black's only developed piece after 14 moves was a queen at c7. White instructively mobilized his pieces for a kingside attack, while black struggled to complete his development. Castling at move 18 felt like the only try for black, but it still proved insufficient:



Stark vs Mygmarsuren



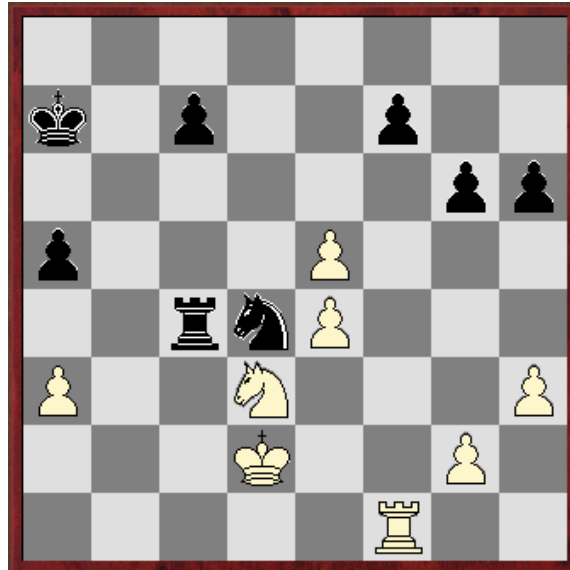
19.Bd8 Qb7 20.Qg4 f5 21.exf6 e5 22.Qg5 Qf7 23.fxc7 Qxc7 24.Rxf8+ Kxf8 25.Be7+ Kg8?! 26.Rd8+ Kf7 27.Rf8+! Qxf8 and now 28.Qf6+ would have been a mate in three, but 28.Bxf8? of course was also sufficient to win the game. Curiously, this was the first win recorded by a New Zealand player in a Fagernes tournament.

Sergey Eliseev (2131) versus **Håvard Eriksen Bech (1951)** saw a Caro-Kann Exchange line leading to about balanced chances as black had some worries for his isolated pawn at d5, while black had some worries for his double pawn at g3. A tense struggle followed in the third and early fourth hour, as both players after castling short tried to attack on the kingside. Eliseev remarkably still had half an hour left on the clock after 30 moves, while Bech had less than a minute. Bech however speeded up with counterplay, and after 48 moves had reached a drawish endgame with queen, bishop and three pawns against queen, knight and three pawns. Eliseev however had the better attacking chances here, and in the sixth hour exchanged of the queens to reach a minor piece endgame in which his extra h-pawn was decisive.

Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118) as white against **Oda Kofoed Skramstad (1945)** went for a rare and apparently unambitious King's Indian line with 5.h3 e5 6.dxe5 dxe5 7.Qxd8+. Black following this had no problems equalizing, and the position after 20 moves was balanced with rook, two knights and six pawns against rook, bishop, knight and six pawns. Oda after 30 moves still had good prospects for a draw, as she was half an hour ahead on the clock with a drawish rook and knight endgame on the board. The cunning 32... Rc4? instead of the very natural 32... Rxa3! however turned out to be a decisive mistake, following a nice calculation from white:

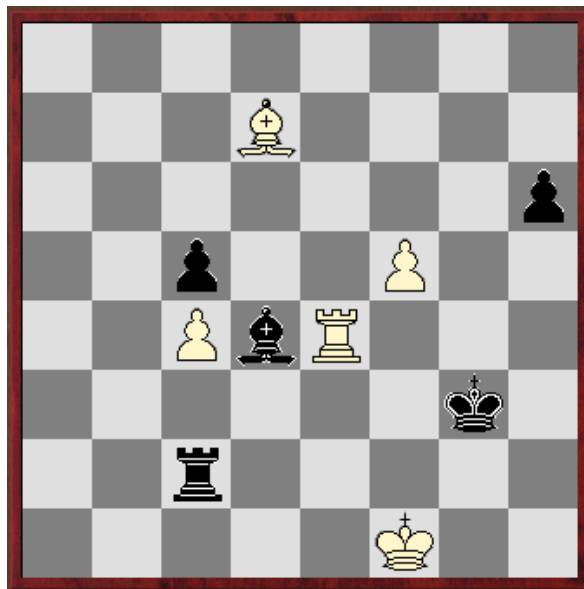


Fiskaaen vs Skramstad



33.Rxf7! Nb3+ 34.Ke3 won the game for white, as his new passed pawn ran faster than the black pieces after 34.--- Rc3 35.e6 Nc1 36.e7 Rxd3+ 37.Kf4 Ne2+ 38.Ke5 1-0

Sebastian Lien (1885) versus **Rounaiv Rana (2099)** was another rare and positional King's Indian opening, allowing black to equalize without any pressure. Tactical exchanges around move 22-24 here left a drawish position with rook, two bishops and five pawns against rook, bishop, knight and five pawns, although black's pair of bishops still gave him the slightly more easy position to play. White however had an active knight, and the game was considered a given draw as black felt forced to exchange the knight for one of his bishops. Opposite-coloured bishops however might help the attacking player also in the rook and bishop endgame – as demonstrated well into the sixth hour of this game:



This of course should be a draw, but black is closer to something – and white fatally underestimated the dark clouds over his king when protecting the pawn at c4 with 52.Be6??:

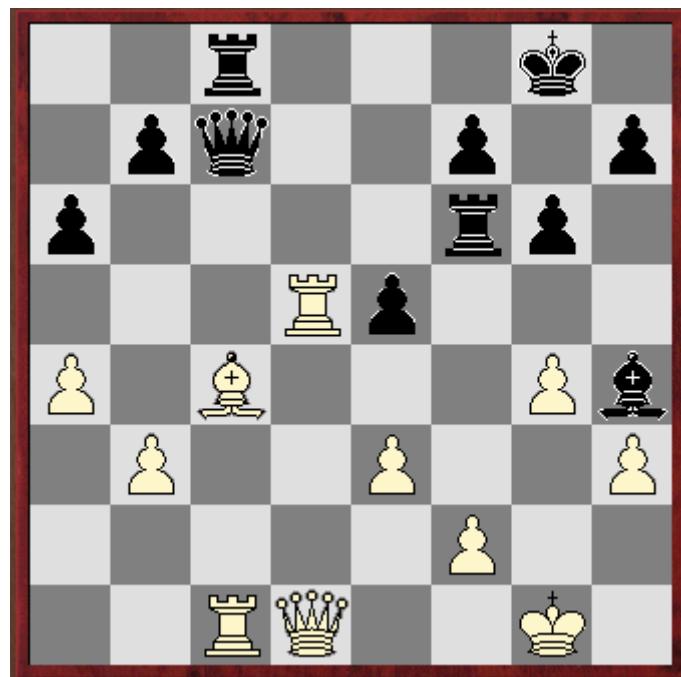
52,--- Kf3! 53.Bd5 Rf2+ 54.Ke1 Bc3+ 55.Kd1 Rd2+! 56.Kc1 Rxd5! and black soon won due to his extra piece.

CM Svetoslav Mihajlov (2094) and **Aidas Juodziukynas (1893)** discussed a Queen's Indian fianchetto with 4... Ba6. Chances first were about balanced but 19... Qc7? was much too careless and gave white a strong initiative after the natural 20.Rac1! White in turn however became too helpful when exchanging his bishop for a knight at f6 two moves later on. Black later defended well and escaped into a dead drawn endgame with bishop and two kingside pawns against bishop and three kingside pawns.



Mihajlov vs Juodziukynas

The Norwegian duel between **Victor Havik (2078)** and **Fredrik Valstad Elsness (1873)** saw a rare line of a Grünfeld, in which the c- and d-pawns were exchanged early. This left white with a slight plus as he had two bishops versus bishop and knight in a rather open position. Havik in the middle game made a good decision as he doubled his heavy pieces in the d-file, allowing black some counterplay against black's f2 pawn:



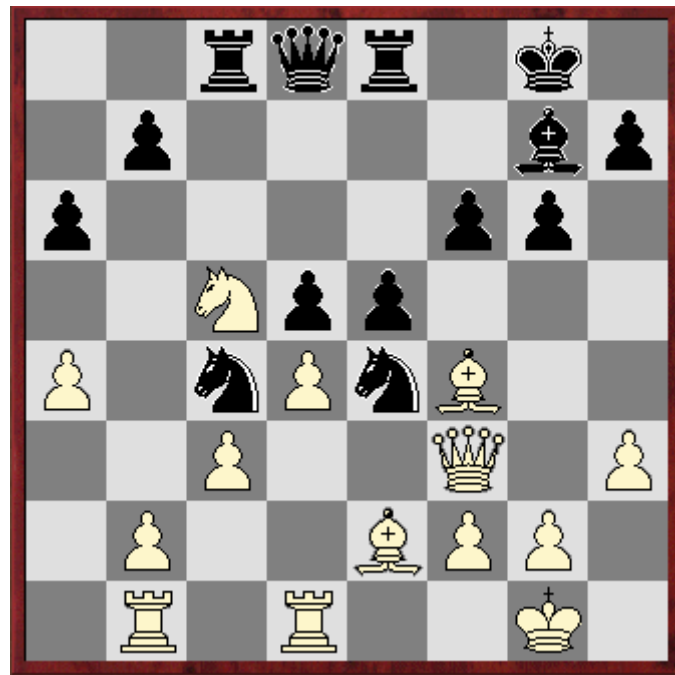
24.Rd7! and now black should have retreated the queen with 24... Qb8!, as the tempting 24... Bxf2+? lost the queen for rook and bishop after 25.Kh2 Qb8 26.Bxf7+ Rxf7 27.Rxc8 Qxc8 28.Rd8+. White with the much safer king had no problems winning the game.

Shadi Sian (2076) versus **Ani Avetisyan (1840)** was a Queen's Gambit Exchange line, in which white kept a very slight edge after exchanging dark-squared bishops and one set of knights. As the queens were exchanged at e5 in move 24, black remained close to equal. Ani at this stage however was running short of time, and bitterly lost on time while playing 33.--- Rh8?! The position on the board at that stage was somewhat better for white, but still with a material balance and a long way to a win.



Avetisyan vs Sian

Finally on board 50, **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1813)** and **Lavinia Valcu (2070)** had an interesting discussion about a Caro-Kann Four Knights. Although white had a pair of bishops, black first did fine due to her active knights at c4 and e4. 19.--- f6?! 20.Nc5 e5? however entered dubious tactics:



21.Bxc4! exf4 22.Nxe4 Rxc4 23.Nc5! was just winning for white, as black had no way to save her stranded rook at c4 against the threat of 24.b3. Rynning later remained an exchange up with an ongoing attack, and had no problems completing a surprising game win.

Open Group

The Open also had a hard-fought round two – and many of the top rated players has had a demanding start in this group as well.

Top-rated **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1963)** today came worse as white in a Scandinavian opening against **Henrik Johansson (1736)**, and was lucky to scrape a draw 1-2 pawns down in the endgame.

Third-rated **Sigurd Kittilsen (1910)** is the highest rated player at 2/2, today winning confidently in the endgame after picking up two pawns in the middle game as white against **Maarten Vreugdenhil (1721)**.

Fourth-rated **Dag Andersen (1899)** meanwhile came under pressure as black in a Sicilian duel against **Ida Lahlum (1755)**, and anyway was much worse when he after 30 moves blundered an exchange and resigned.

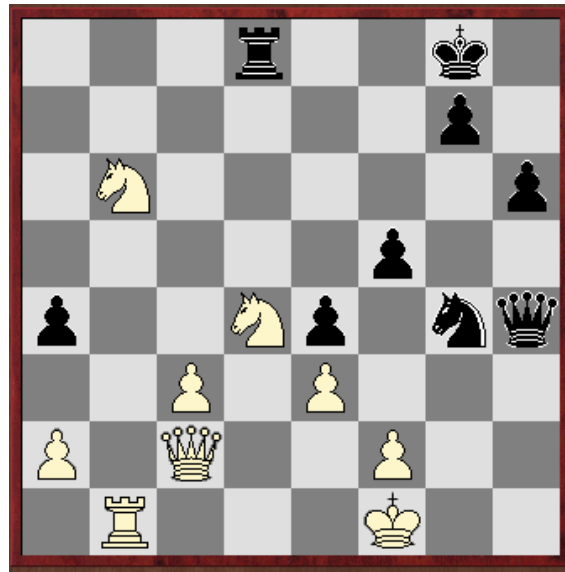


Fifth-rated **Morten Rolstad (1879)** kept a slight pressure all into the knight endgame as white against **Reddy Sushrutha (1707)**, but never came really close to winning chances against a sound defending opponent.

Sixth-rated **Tim Spanton (1876)** instead joined the 2/2 club, successfully realizing his extra pawn in a bishop endgame against **Daniel Vollheim (1713)**.

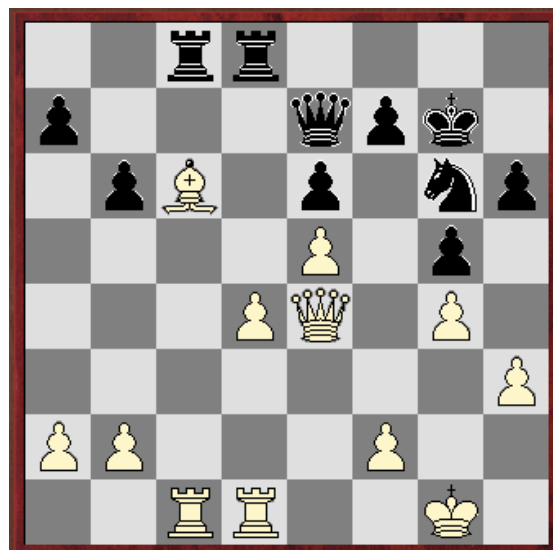
The fastest win on the top board today came on the sixth board, as 20 year old **Amund Pihl Strand (1860)** won by a crushing attack in 18 moves as white against **Bjørn Lie (1690)**.

Board seven saw a fairly big turn and surprise, as the unpredictable veteran **Karim Ali (1855)** wasted a big opening advantage and lost as black against Sophie Damiano (1691).



36.--- Nxe3+? asked too much from the position, as white could instructively evacuate her king and keep a decisive material advantage following 37.fxe3 Qh1+ 38.Ke2 Qg2+ 39.Kd1 Qf1+ 40.Kd2 Qf2+ 41.Kc1 Qxe3 42.Qd2.

The 68 year old Ukrainian **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1747)** for some moves in the middle game was a pawn down with an inferior position as black against the first round young surprise man **Steinar Diseth Skogholt (1611)**. Kuzmenko however again efficiently used his chance for an attack against the opponent's king:



27.Ba4? Rxc1! 28.Rxc1 Qb4 29.Bb3 Rxd4 30.Qb7 Nf4 31.Kf1 Qb5+ and black soon won.

Benjamin Halvorsen (1848) soon recovered from his lost first round game, and today had a winning attack running against second rated **Ståle Sending (1959)** before 15 moves (more important, he won it after 18 moves).

None of the games on the lower boards had a very surprising outcome, although we noted a nice attacking win for 13 year old **Sebastian Sigvaldsen (1457)** as white against 71 year old **Terje Lie (1594)**.

Six players following this are sharing the lead at 2,0/2 in the Open.

Top round pairings for round 3 will be Mykhailo Kuzmenko white against Sigurd Kittilsen, Tim Spanton white against Ida Lahlum, and Sophie Damiano white against Amund Pihl Strand.

Two female players on the top three boards here definitely qualifies as a surprise.



From the Open group

Photos by Tom Eriksen