

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2024

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

3



GM Group

Round 3 also became a remarkably hard-fought one on the top boards, with four out of five games between players at 2/2 getting a winner.

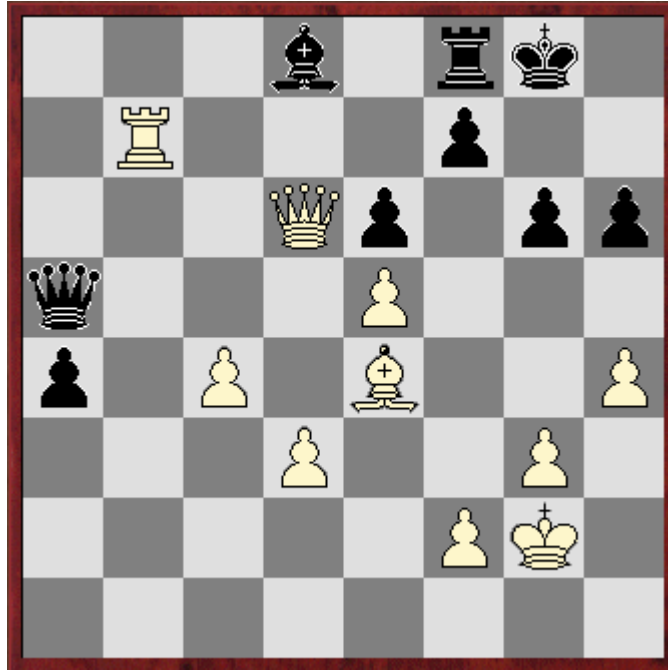
Second-ranked GM Rinat Jumabayev of Kazakhstan by tactical means won a tight four-hour first-board battle as white against English IM Ameet Ghasi, while fourth-rated GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly of India on the second board won a fast and furious attacking game against Israeli IM Yahli Sokolovsky. Sixth-rated GM Ido Gorshtein of Israel true to his technical style won a patient positional game as white against the young Norwegian IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy on the third board.

Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots as white on the fourth board also pushed hard for a win, but in the end had to accept a draw against soundly defending English IM Jonah Willow. Today's sensation man on the top boards was the 17 year old Norwegian FM Saad Elmi, winning by a powerful counterattack as black against GM Pranav Anand on the fifth board.

Gorshtein white versus Jumabayev and Elmi white versus Ganguly will be the top board pairings for round 4, with these four players sharing the lead at 3/3 – half a point ahead of ten more players. This group at 2,5/3 also includes IM Sambit Panda of India, today winning as white against fifth rated IM Elham Amar.

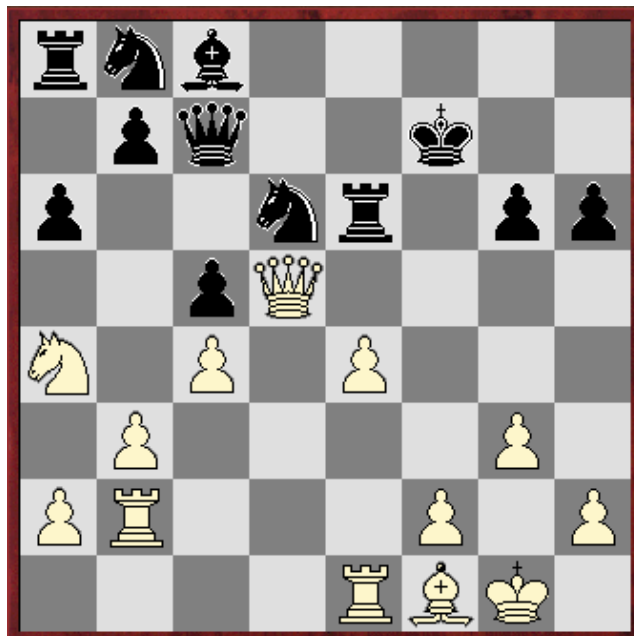
The main surprise outside of the top ten boards today was the Norwegian junior Sergey Eliseev, hitting back from a dubious opening to win a nice attacking game as white against GM Stellan Brynell.

The first board duel between **GM Rinat Jumabayev (2598)** and **IM Ameet Ghasi (2485)** was a very French-like Sicilian, in which white after 12 moves was slightly better on the board and some 40 minutes ahead on the clock. White at move 20 made a good decision with 20.Bxa5!, giving up his bishop for a knight to disrupt black's queenside pawns and open the b-file. Ghasi however fought on well under double pressure on the board and clock. As both players ran short of time, black's passed a-pawn gave white some headache. Jumabayev repeated with 39.Rb5 Qa7 40.Rb7 Qa5 and gave himself some minutes to consider the position after passing 40 moves, but then acted as intended:



41. Bxg6! a3 (as 41.--- fxg6 42.Qxe6+ Kh8 43.Qxg6 is hopeless) 42.Qd7! a2 43.Bxf7+ Kh8 44.Bg6 1-0

GM Surya Shektar Ganguly (2574) and **IM Yahli Sokolovsky (2475)** on the second board discussed an apparently positional Classical King's Indian, which suddenly turned very tactical as white went for 14.Nxd6 followed by 15.Nxf7. White first had only two pawns for the knight, but black had a much too open king and soon stumbled into powerful threats.



20.--- b6? Leaving the pin with 20.--- Kg7! was a need for survival. Now of course 21.Qxa8 Bb7 wins for black, and so white of course instead went for 21.Bh3! Nb7? 22.b4 cxb4 23.Rxb4 b5 24.cxb5 axb5 25.Rxb5 1-0.

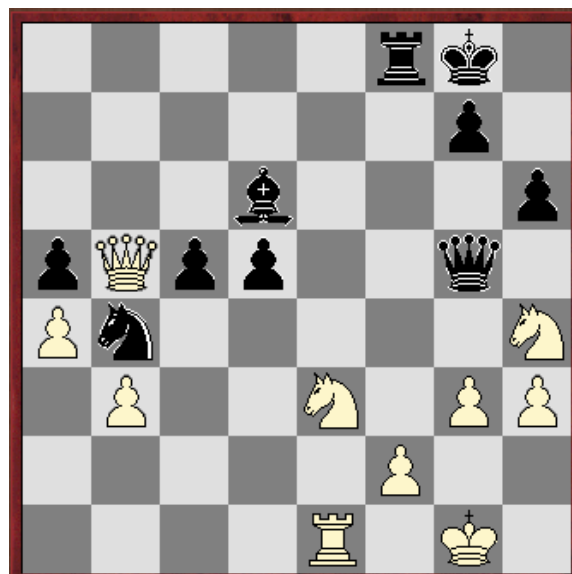
GM Ido Gorshtein (2574) versus **IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2454)** was a dynamic English opening in which material was balanced, while white had a slight initiative both before and after the queens were exchanged with 12.Qxb6 axb6. Clocks after 16 moves were also balanced, while white due to his better pawn structure was slightly better with two rooks, knight and seven pawns left on each side. Black after 21 moves had a nice knight at d3, but the knight hit only air while white's mobile knight was a real threat against black's weak pawns. Black a bit too loose gave up his pawn at g5 after 26 moves, and Gorshtein with his excellent technique later had no problems realizing his extra pawn in the double rook endgame.



Gorshtein vs Kvaløy

GM Kaido Kulaots (2534) versus **IM Jonah B. Willow (2446)** saw another French-like Sicilian with an Englishman on the black side. Willow spent much time from the opening, and after 16.h5 Nh8 white due to his strong fianchetto bishop had an advantage despite black's better pawn structure. Willow however defended very well, and walked on the wire into a double rook endgame with three pawns on each side. Black's barking rooks here compensated for his inferior pawn structure, and after the first time control it soon dried out to a draw.

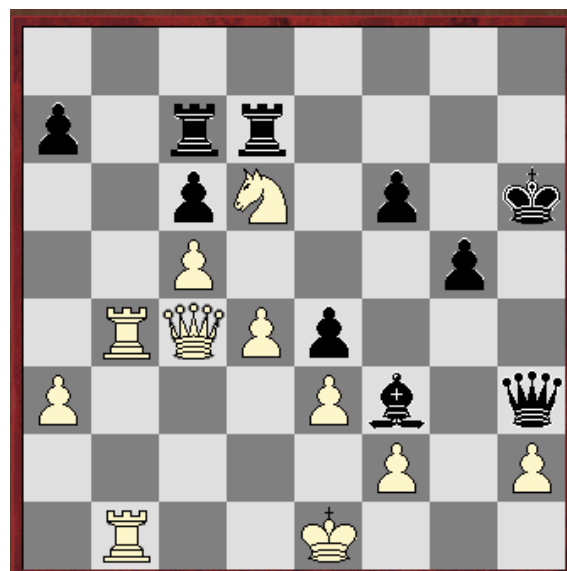
Indian **GM Pranav Anand (2519)** and Norwegian **FM Saad Elmi (2344)** entered a Two Knights Opening and exchanged the light-squared bishops at e6, after which white had a slight advantage on the clock as well as on the board. Black however achieved typical counterplay by installing a knight at the f4 square, and kept a slight f-file pressure as white felt forced to exchange the knight. Elmi after 38 moves had one minute against three on the clock, but still used his chance efficiently:



39.Qe2? Rxf2! 40.Kxf2 Bxg3 41.Kf1 Bxh4 resulted in balanced material with ongoing worries for the white king. White a few moves later gave up his knight to exchange queens, but Elmi won convincingly in the remaining endgame with bishop, knight and three pawns against rook and three pawns. Much too early to talk about IM norm chances after round 3, but it should be mentioned that 17 year old Elmi after defeating two GMs has had a fantastic start on this run for his third norm.

The 16 year old Swede **IM Edvin Trost (2432)** as white in a Slav against Indian **GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2578)** reached a symmetrical position by exchanging with 3.cxd5, but the game then went an original way with 4.Bg5 f6 5.Bd2. White soon accelerated in the center with 8.e4 and came slightly better in an isolated queen's pawn position. White around move 19-23 apparently had a clear advantage due to his pressure against the backward black pawn at e6, but the GM found a remarkably good plan to protect it with 21... f5 followed by 22... Rf6. Playing Bd3 followed by Bb5 to exchange black's rather passive bishop at d7 later hardly improved white's position, as black could protect the e6 pawn without the bishop. Black following this anyway was over the hill when white at move 29 offered a draw.

Indian **IM Sambit Panda (2377)** and Norwegian **IM Elham Amar (2567)** also made a slow start with a Queen's Gambit Exchange, but the game soon went unbalanced as black accelerated on the kingside with f6 and g5. White spent much time on the clock, but after exchanging three sets of minor pieces he came slightly better on the board. Black's king via f7 found a fairly safe home at g7, but white kept some advantage as his knight at c4 was superior to black's bishop at g6. White later played simple chess, winning black's backward pawn at b7 by doubling his rook in the b-file and moving the knight up to a5. Creative Amar came up with counterplay on the kingside to balance the chances, but then suddenly lost his concentration:



Taking back the pawn with 32... Qxh2 would have left the position in some kind of dynamic balance, while 32... Kh5?? 33.Ne8! won an exchange and reached a winning position for white. White within a few more moves succeeded in exchanging off the queens, reaching an endgame in which his extra exchange combined with the passed c-pawn was absolutely decisive.

FM Yuval Yaniv (2368) and **GM Frode Urkedal (2536)** today had a positional discussion about a closed Ruy Lopez. Urkedal for once spent much time and Yaniv after 22 moves was some 20 minutes ahead on the clock, while chances on the board were about balanced after exchanging all of the bishops plus one set of knights. White had a rook on a7 and some queenside space advantage due to his pawn at d5, while black had played e4 with some chances for a kingside attack. Chances remained almost balanced following a tricky queen exchange at



Yaniv vs Urkedal

move 28. Yaniv however spent much time without finding any active plan in the remaining endgame with two rooks, one knight and five pawns on each side. Urkedal efficiently used his chance to win a pawn and suddenly had a winning attack just before the time control.

39.--- Rc2? actually was a serious time trouble mistake as white after 40.Rac7! could exchange one set of rooks. Black however still was a pawn up in the remaining rook and knight endgame, and following some more inaccuracies from white he could pick up white's final pawn and reach a winning endgame with rook, knight and two connected pawns against rook and knight.

The young Norwegian **FM Gunnar Lund (2335)** as white in a Semi-Slav against the young Indian **GM Raja Rithvik R (2532)** went for a positional Meran set up, but black was perfectly fine as he got the time needed to realize the c5-break and develop his light-squared bishop to b7.



Lund vs Rithvik

Chances after 17 moves following this were fairly balanced on the clock and board. White following 19.b4!? had a slight initiative, but accepting a draw by repetition still was a fairly natural choice for an IM-candidate against a GM.

IM Moksh Doshi (2353) versus **GM Erik Blomqvist (2511)** made an exciting start with a Queen's Indian fianchetto line in which white sacrifices a pawn in the air at d5. Black decided to return the d-pawn, after which a steam of sound exchanges before 30 moves resulted in a drawish knight endgame with six pawns on each side. The GM had a three versus two majority in the queenside and fought on. The IM however defended well enough and after 55 landed in a rare but safely drawn position with knight versus knight and two a-pawns.



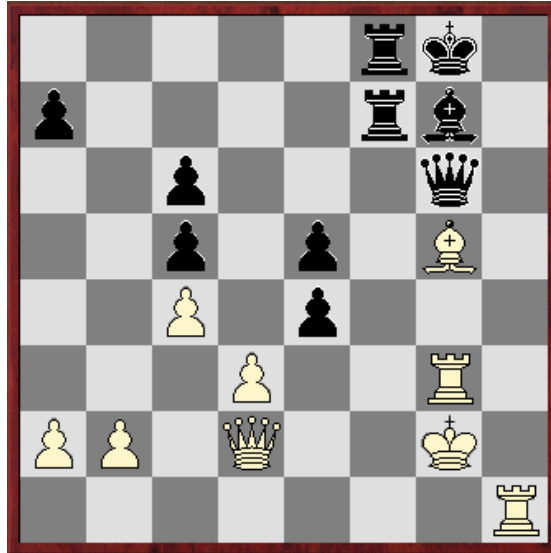
Doshi vs Blomqvist

IM Isik Can (2493) and **IM Ameya Audi (2378)** meanwhile tested out a rare and rather closed Grünfeld opening, in which one set of pawns, one set of knights and one set of bishops were exchanged within the first 15 moves. Black did fine as he afterwards could put his knight on the c4 outpost, although his backward pawn at c6 could be a long term weakness. White eventually succeeded in exchanging the knight and take the pawn at c6. Black in the meantime hit back against the white pawns and after 51 moves had reached a dead drawn endgame with rook, bishop and two kingside pawns in each camp.



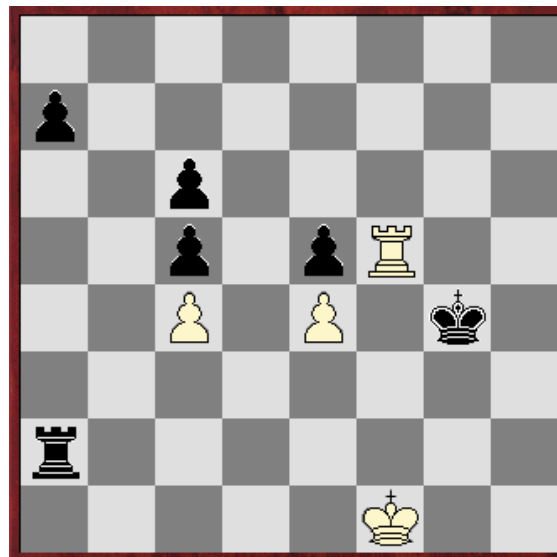
Can vs Audi

48 year old **IM Erik Hedman (2311)** versus 19 year old **IM Tobias Kölle (2460)** saw an apparently positional Sicilian Moscow duel, in which white soon exchanged his light-squared bishop for a knight at c6 – leaving white with the better pawn structure and black with a pair of bishops. The heat intensified as white first started a kingside pawn storm instead of castling, and then sacrificed a pawn to open the g-file while putting his own king in an airy position at f2. White's g-file attack was dangerous, but black got counterplay in the f-file. Although far behind on the clock, black in the fourth hour made the better calculations and walked confidently around on the water with his king:



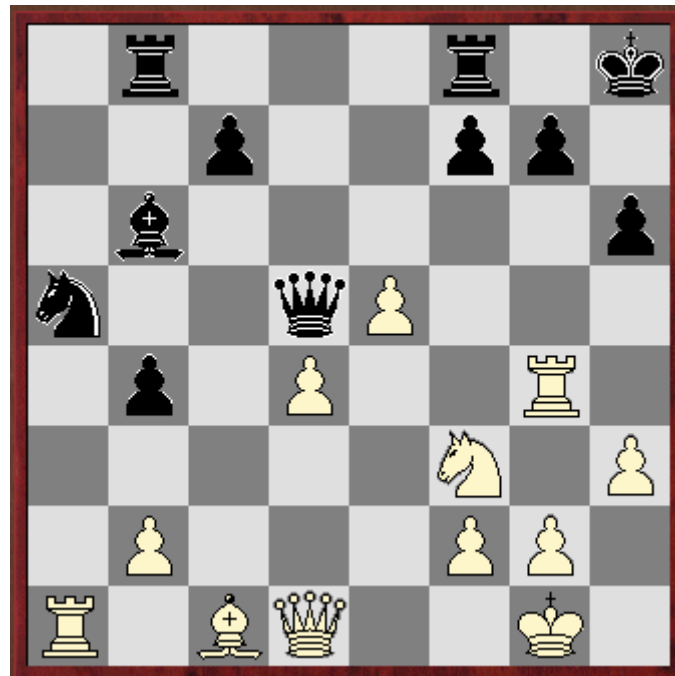
30.Bh6? Qf5! 31.Bxg7? Rxg7 32.Rxg7+ Kxg7 33.Qh6 Kf7 with two pawns extra and a winning position for black – as 34.Rf1? will lose a rook instead of winning a queen for white after 34.--- Rg8+.

True enough black in the rook endgame later made a mistake which gave white an objectively drawn position for a few moves, but black remained two pawns up and won following an understandable mistake from white.



Now 41.Ke1! followed by 42.Rxe5 should be enough for a draw. The direct 41.Rxe5? invited the black king in, and black following 41.--- Kf3 42.Rf5+ Kxe4 44.Rxc5 Ra6 reached a won endgame with rook and two pawns versus rook and one pawn. Margins were small here, but the youngest and highest rated IM still won well deserved.

American **IM Nico Chasin (2447)** as white against Dane **FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2351)** went for a Ruy Lopez Morphy duel. Something soon after the opening here went seriously wrong for black, as white could just take black's knight at e4 and win a pawn. Chasin following this anyway was a pawn up with a much better position when he got the chance to finish off the game by a classical bishop sacrifice:



23.Bxh6! gxh6 24.Qd2 Kh7? 25.Ng5+! Kg6 26.Ne6+ Kf5 27.Ng7 mate 1-0

Meanwhile Indian **WGM Pallathur Nandhidhaa (2305)** as white against Norwegian **IM Frode Elsness (2437)** entered a London system and then took on c5. White somehow hung on to the extra pawn at c5 while exchanging all of the pieces. Black however all of time had enough activity to compensate, and white's extra pawn after 22 moves was a not too strong double f-pawn. Black gave up one pawn to reach a drawn rook endgame with two kingside pawns against three kingside pawns – and then gave up a second pawn to force a stone dead endgame with rook versus rook and two g-pawns.



Nandhidhaa vs Elsness

IM Linus Johansson (2427) and **IM Dushyant Sharma (2331)** started up with a Queen's Gambit Tarrasch, soon leading to a symmetrical structure in which white had an isolated pawn at d4 and black one at d5. Black here interestingly soon gave up both his bishops for the white knights. White's pair of bishops did not give him much with such a semi-closed pawn structure, as black's knights had potentially strong squares at e4 and c4. White after 22 moves had 40 against 20 minutes on the clock, but black made a sound decision to go for a tactical exchange of the remaining center pawns. Black after 33 moves had less than one minute on the clock, but had reached a very drawish endgame with queen, knight and five pawns against queen, bishop and five pawns. Black due to time shortage made a very strange decision just before the time control, sacrificing his key pawn at a6 with 38... Nd5? instead of just keeping the pawn with 38... a5! Johansson efficiently cashed in one more pawn afterwards, and definitely decided the endgame as he at move 49 could force a queen exchange.

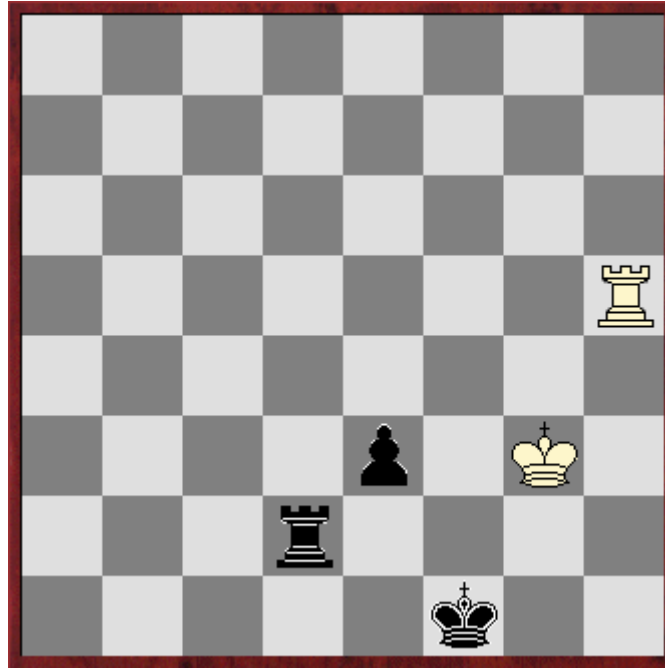


Sharma vs Johansson

IM Hasan Huseyin Celik (2417) versus **FM Roy Vagman (2311)** saw another test of a very modern Queen's Gambit line in which black takes a pawn at c4 only to give it back at b5 – leaving black with two isolated c-pawns and an isolated a-pawn. Black demonstrated enough compensation due his d5 stronghold. The position after 25 moves was approximately balanced, as black had succeeded in exchanging three sets of minor pieces plus one of his c-pawns. After 40 moves the rook endgame with four pawns on each side was considered a very likely draw. White's defence still was not trivial as his center pawns at d4 and e5 now were weak and black's king following this was closer to the battlefield than white's. Black in short won a pawn and reached a three versus two pawns rook endgame which jumped a bit back and forth between a draw and win for black. The decisive and fairly instructive moment came during mutual time pressure at move 80:



Celik vs Vagman



Now 80.--- Kg1! 81.Re5 e2, intending 82.Kf3 Kf1, is a win for black. Vagman instead went in the wrong direction with 80.--- Ke2? – and Celik efficiently saved the draw with 81.Ra5 Ke1 82.Kf3 e2 83.Ke3 Kd1 84.Ra1+ Kc2 85.Re1 ½-½

IM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2402) versus **WFM Shivika Rohilla (2003)** saw a Sicilian Two Knights opening in which black and her pair of bishops apparently first did fine. Ingebretsen however played very fast and succeeded with his preparations, as black’s compensation for a pawn gradually vanished. 16 year old Rohilla understandably failed to keep up the initiative as she ran short of time. White before move 30 got the help needed to establish a decisive passed pawn at a6 and at move 34 he confidently promoted a second queen at a8 – correctly not fearing a few revenge checks from black.

IM Mohapatra Sidhant (2379) and **WFM Anishka Vikram (1995)** discussed a Catalan opening in which black for a while succeeded in keeping an extra pawn at c4. After 16 moves she however felt forced to return the pawn, leaving a position in which white’s pair of bishops plus center and better pawn structure gave him a pleasant plus. White’s advantage increased following a powerful d5-break, and black following this felt forced to give up a pawn. White’s pair of bishops combined with the passed a-pawn here gave him a fairly safe win in the endgame with rook, two bishops and four pawns against rook, bishop, knight and three pawns.

13 year old **FM Daakshin Arun (2283)** as white against 24 year old **GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2618)** went for a Queen's Gambit Exchange line, but black played it very aggressively and unbalanced the position with Bb4 followed by h6 and g5. White later succeeded in exchanging many pieces, but black after sacrificing a pawn kept a promising initiative. Exchanging queens at move 25 was somewhat of an emergency exit for white, as black within two moves won back the pawn with a free initiative in the remaining rooks and knight endgame. Puranik within a few moves won a pawn, and in the fifth hour landed the game in a safely won rook endgame with two connected passed pawns against one. Top rated Puranik came back on track with a patient working day win as black today, but still is a full point behind the top board players from the start of round 4.

GM James Moreby (2260) as white against **GM Momchil Petkov (2500)** trusted a solid English fianchetto, first with success as white following an early queen exchange kept an edge due to his pair of fianchetto bishops. The GM apparently was under some pressure, but soon sacrificed a pawn to reach a double minor piece endgame which was a fairly trivial draw due to the opposite-coloured bishops.



Moreby vs Petkov

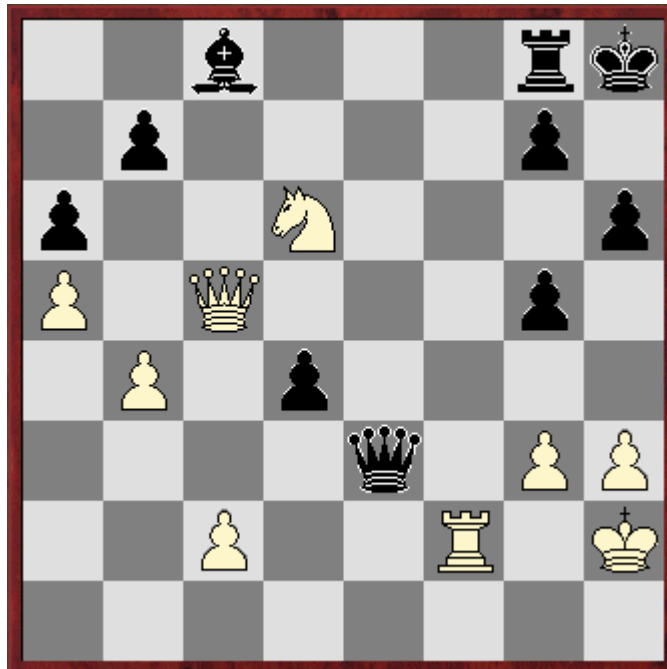
IM Semen Mitusov (2487) today gave his rare Ruy Lopez line with 3... Nge7 and 4... Ng6 another test as black against **FM Fredrik Lindh (2256)**. Black for some moves had a pair of bishops, but felt forced to exchange one of them and came slightly worse with queen, two rooks and seven pawns against queen, two rooks, knight and seven pawns.



Lindh vs Mitusov

White's knight here was superior to black's bishop at c8, and white apparently had a clear advantage as the knight at move 28 reached e4.

White's decision to sacrifice the pawn at e5 however was based upon some kind of miscalculation, and as white ran seriously short of time his compensation for the pawn soon vanished. The game was definitely decided by a classical time trouble blunder:



39.Kg2?? Bxh3+ 40.Kxh3 Qxf2 and very soon 0-1.

GM Tiger Hillarp (2473) as white against 14 year old **Isak Vinh Brattgjerd (2228)** started up with a King's Indian Attack, and happily accepted two f-pawns to get the pair of bishops.

Black first was able to balance the chances after exchanging off the queens, although white's pair of bishops gave him the easier position to play.

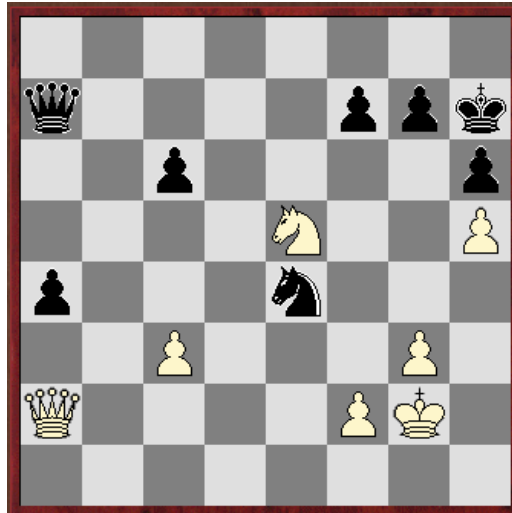
The GM made the much better evaluation when the players just before move 30 entered tactical exchanges: Black's passed pawn at c3 afterwards was more weak than strong, while white's bishops dominated the now open board.

Following this white after the first time control came up a pawn up with a winning advantage in the double minor piece endgame.



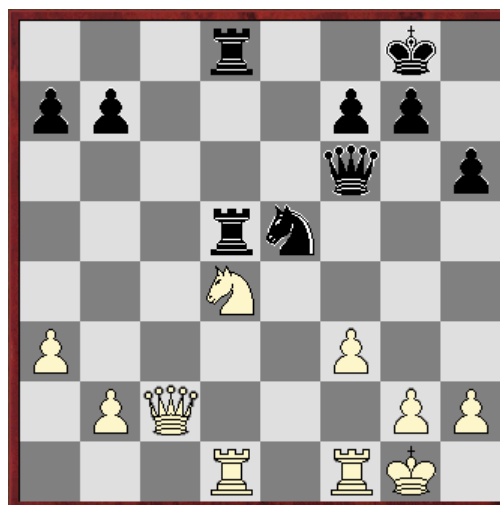
Brattgjerd vs Hillarp

The Norwegian junior champion **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2215)** as white against **IM Hampus Sörensen (2428)** started up with a King's Indian Attack, leading to a symmetrical center with d-pawns exchanged and pawn at e4 for white versus pawn at e5 for black. Sörensen had no problems equalizing and got a slight structural advantage as white disrupted his queenside pawns. The IM methodically increased the pressure and his position turned winning as he early in the fourth hour won a pawn. After 35 moves black's extra pawn was an a-pawn which gave him a winning advantage in the queen and knight endgame. But then the IM under mutual time pressure made a tactical blunder:



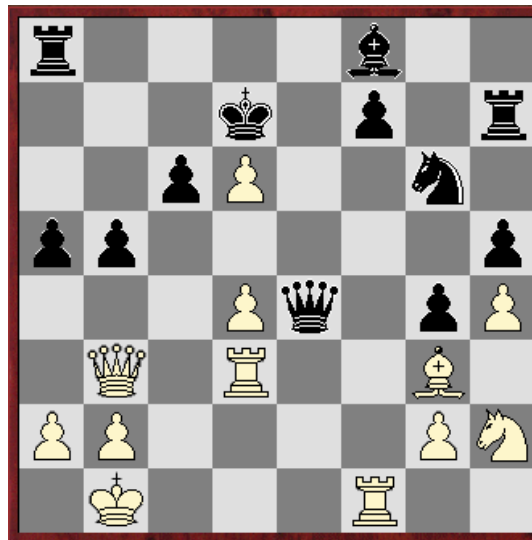
36.--- a3?? 37.Nc4 Qxf2+ 38.Qxf2 Nxf2 and now of course 39.Kxf2? a2 is over, but instead 39.Nxa3 allowed white to escape into a drawish knight endgame. Black had an extra pawn and played on for some 30 moves more, but had too few pawns left to create winning chances.

The Young Indian **Aniruddh Chatterjee (2182)** challenged Greek **IM Stavroula Tsolakidou (2424)** with 4.f3 and a rare Sämisch set up in a Nimzo-Indian. White for the first 15 moves kept a slight initiative, but black took over the initiative following a powerful rook centralization. Tsolakidou and her rook anyway had powerful pressure when white overlooked a both elegant and original tactical hit:



22.Nb3? Nxf3+! 23.gxf3 Rxd1 – and white resigned without asking black to demonstrate 24.Rxd1 Qg6+! 25.Qxg6 Rxd1+ 26.Kf2 fxg6 with an easily won endgame.

Sergey Eliseev (2131) versus **GM Stellan Brynell (2406)** saw another Ruy Lopez Morphy duel. In this one white made a few instructive mistakes, allowing black to start a promising pawn storm on the kingside within the first 12 moves. As black had his own king at d7, the position however naturally was double-edged and both players spent a lot of time. Eliseev castled long and efficiently used his chance when the GM went astray with a slow and strange Nd4-Ne6-c6-Nd4 plan. Suddenly white had a promising attack while black had no real counterplay on the kingside. Eliseev played very well in the second half of this game and efficiently used his chance as the GM made the decisive mistake with a much too weakening 29... b5?:



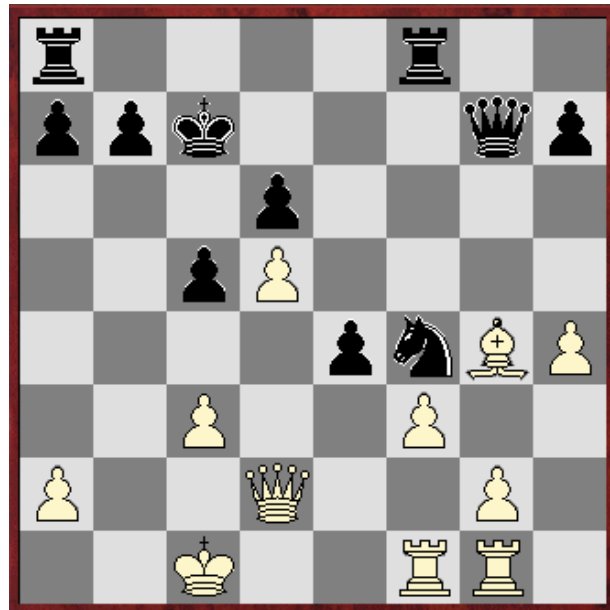
30.d5! Rc8 31.dxc6+ Rxc6 32.Qxb5 Bh6 33.Ka1 Qb4 34.Qf5+ Kd8 35.Rb3 Qc4 36.Rb8+ Rc8 37.Qf6+ Ke8 38.d7+ Kxd7 39.Rd1+ with a mate soon to follow – 1-0. Although Eliseev is an unpredictable and capable attacking player, the result of course qualified as a small sensation – and even more so following the opening.

The young Estonian **IM Mai Narva (2399)** as black against Norwegian junior **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)** entered a provocative Modern opening line in which black gave up her fianchetto bishop for a knight at c3, weakening white's queenside pawns before closing the center.

Black's king at c7 looked a little clumsy, but the king remained rather safe and black after exchanging two more minor pieces could open the kingside for a counterattack against the white king at c1:



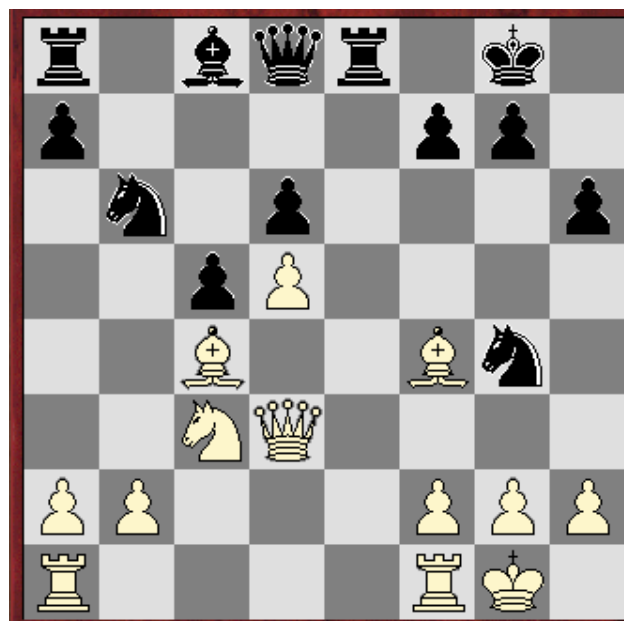
Narva vs Fiskaaen



25.g3? turned out to be the decisive mistake as black following 25... e3! 26.Qxe3 Rae8 27.Qd2 Re2 had a winning attack. Giving up the queen for rook and knight here was rather desperate and white resigned a few moves later on.

Rounaiv Rana (2099) versus IM Sebastian Mihajlov (2373) was a Classical Nimzo-Indian opening in which black went for the slightly provocative and very unusual 4... h6?! It worked out very well as white first established a big center and then did not find the best way to protect it, leaving black's pair of knights disturbingly active.

16.Bf4? in a shaky position turned out to be a more or less losing mistake:



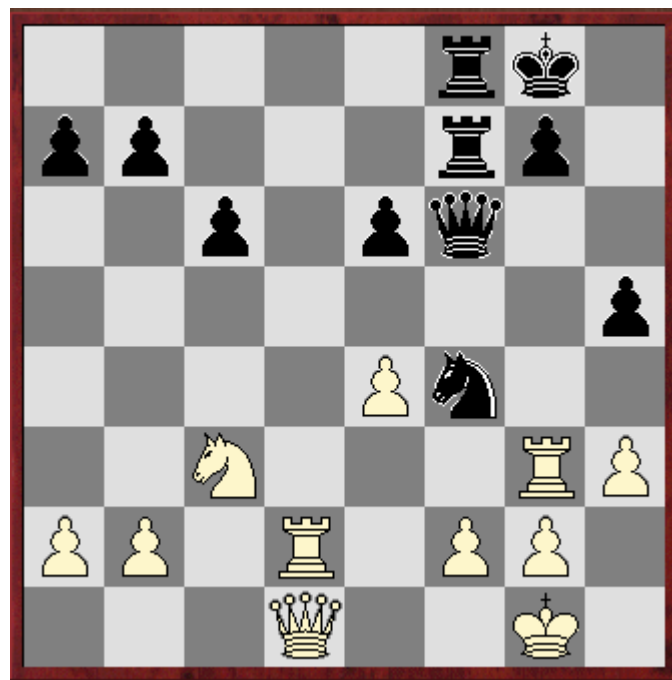
16... Qf6! 17.Bb5? Qxf4! 18.g3 Qf5 19.Qxf5 Bxf5 20.Bxe8 Rxe8 left black in a winning position with two minor pieces for a rook.

Martin Øksendal (2086) versus **FM Theodor Kenneskog (2358)** lasted 22 moves, but still only about half an hour. A draw by repetition in the final position was sensible enough and both players made only good moves along the road, but it is all well known Sicilian Najdorf theory.

Victor Havik (2078) first could be fairly well satisfied with his Meran line in a Semi-Slav opening against **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2350)**. After 18 moves the players had exchanged three sets of minor pieces and reached a fairly balanced position with queen, two rooks, knight and six pawns on each side. White even had the better pawn structure and computers gave his position as slightly better. Black however had the easier position to play with a strong knight at f4.



Havik vs Carlsson



23.Rd7? here although natural was an outright blunder, as black after 23.--- Rxd7 24.Qxd7 had a tactical win with 24.--- h4! 25.e5 Ne2+! Black missed that chance but still kept a promising attack, and white anyway was in deep trouble when he at move 29 overlooked another knight fork on e2 and resigned.

FM Håvard Haug (2341) as white against **Shadi Sian (2076)** followed his own head with a rare Queen's Pawn opening, which first was in dynamic balance as black had two bishops and white the better pawn structure. White definitely came better as black helpfully exchanged one of his bishops, and white's structural advantage increased as black also offered a queen exchange at b6. The remaining position with two rooks, bishop and six pawns against two rooks, knight and six pawns after 20 moves was already very difficult for black, as he had a terrible pawn structure and badly coordinated pieces. Creative Haug obviously enjoyed this position and well before move 40 won an exchange.



Sian vs Haug

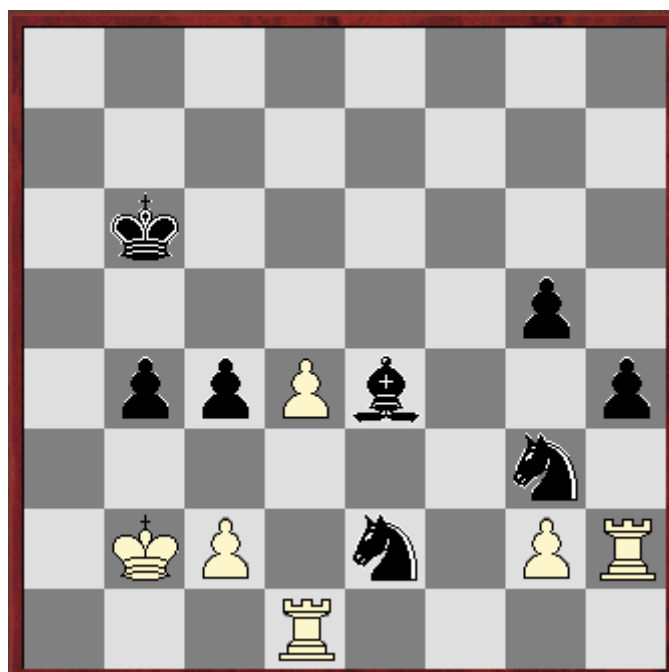
WIM Ioulia Makka (1983) versus **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2336)** started up with a French Winawer in which white chose 4.exd5 instead of the more ambitious 4.e5. Black following this had no problems to develop his pieces and equalize. White's pair of bishops was worth less than nothing in such a closed position, and black's knights soon came to dominate following an early queen exchange.



Makka vs Vestby-Ellingsen

White around move 30 was passive but still appeared to have fair drawing chances.

The IM however neatly sacrificed one of his rooks for a bishop to intervene at e1 with the remaining rook. Black could sacrifice an exchange with no risk here as white's rook at h2 was locked all out of play, hitting a granite black pawn at h4. Consequently black's three minor pieces after the time control was much stronger than white's two rooks. The IM in the fifth hour decided by an unusual mating attack:



50.--- c3+! 51.Kb3 Kb5 52.d5 Nc1+! and 0-1 as 53.Rxc1 Bxd5 is mate.

IM Helge A Nordahl (2330) of Norway and **CM John Stark (1947)** of New Zealand via 1.d4 e6 2.c4 b6 3.Nc3 Bb7 4.a3 f5 reached some kind of Dutch-Queen's Indian-Owen hybrid, in which black had enough counterplay to balance white's center pawns. The center later was blown up and left a fairly balanced position in which white controlled the d-file and black the e-file.



Nordahl vs Stark

The game had a sudden and somewhat confusing finish after 31 moves as the IM first sacrificed a loose pawn at b4, and then when black accepted offered a draw – which was also accepted. Black according to the computers were objectively better in the final position, but draw as black against an IM obviously is a safe and strong result for a long travelling 1900-player above 35. Stark at 1.5/3 is doing very well so far.

Rune Kleiven Rynning (1813) versus **FM Nicolai Kistrup (2324)** was a positional Sicilian Moscow duel in which white due to his pawn at e5 kept a center advantage, but black had no problems after exchanging three sets of minor pieces.

21.b3? from an approximately balanced position was a very strange pawn sacrifice, which became even stranger as black cashed in a pawn at a3 followed by another one at d4, reaching a won queen and knight endgame with two extra pawns well before move 40.



Kistrup vs Rynning

GM Prraneeth Vuppala (2506) arrived more than 20 minutes delayed today, and finally having arrived he did not get much advantage out of his English fianchetto as white against **CM Svetoslav Mihajlov (2094)**. 22.--- Nc8? however was a mistake, inviting white to play 23.a4! followed by 24.a5 with a strong initiative. White following this anyway was much better when black more or less in desperation took the pawn at a5, running straight into an a-file pin winning a piece for white.

The Norwegian junior duel between **FM Shazil Shehzad (2301)** and **Ask Amundsen (2069)** started up like a rather unconventional Benkö Gambit in which white gave back two pawns, leaving black a pawn up.

White got compensation due to his fairly active pieces and black's scattered pawns. Chances were about balanced until black went astray with a somewhat naive 26.--- Ng4? – threatening 27.--- Qxh2+ but running straight into a tactical 28.Bf4! which won an exchange.

Black tried to repair by more complications, but ended up a piece short in the minor piece endgame.



Amundsen vs Shehzad

Sondre Melaa (2285) and **Victor Lilliehöök (2060)** discussed an Italian opening in which black first reached fairly balanced chances, but white due to his better pawn structure and strong knight at c5 came better around move 25. 28.--- a5? was an understandable search for counterplay, but still backfired badly as white's passed a-pawn soon decided the game.

Norwegian **FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2277)** as white against the young American **Gokul Thangavel (1990)** started up with a Caro-Kann Two Knights line, in which black first could be well satisfied with his position after exchanging all the knights. Black later had some initiative, but made the position very double-edged by advancing his pawns to e4 and f4. Exchanging the light-squared bishops too was fine from a black point of view, and black's passed pawn at e3 gave him an advantage after 30 moves.



Al-Tarboush vs Thangavel

Al-Tarboush however again was well ahead on the clock, and got his reward as Thangavel ran short of time. After the first time control white was a pawn up in a double-rook endgame, after getting around with his queen to eliminate black's advanced pawns at f4 and e3. Black probably had enough activity to save this even in the rook endgame, but his position now was difficult. White in short won this game fair enough, if a little lucky, as black ran short of time and made some more mistakes.

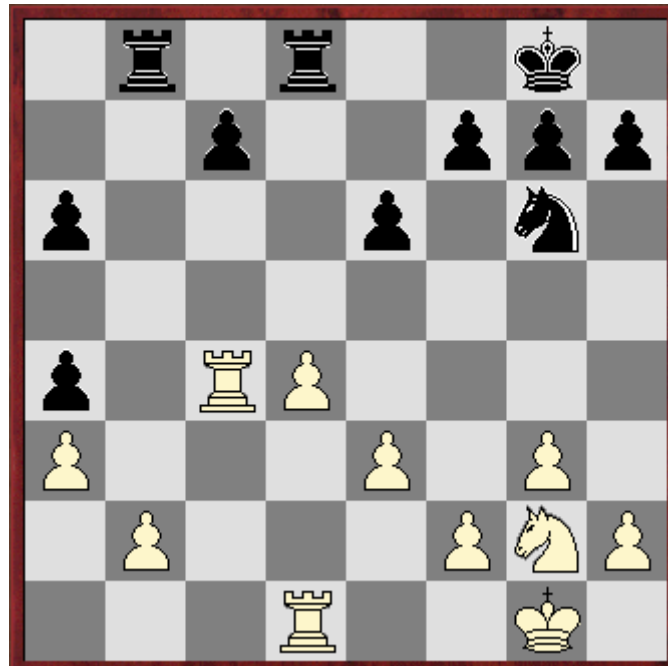
The very talented teenagers **Harry Zheng (2077)** and **FM Ritvik Krishnan (2277)** discussed a French Tarrasch with 3... a6, reaching a roughly balanced isolated queen's pawn position. The pawn structure became symmetrical as white also accepted an isolated queen's pawn after 23 moves. More sound exchanges followed, leaving after 36 moves a fairly balanced endgame with queen, bishop and five pawns against queen, knight and five pawns. Even the queen endgame with four against four pawns was drawish after 47 moves. White however had placed



Zheng vs Krishnan

himself in a demanding situation as he already was down to one minute on the clock, having spent some 40 minutes for the last seven moves. Black with a slight initiative of course played on and was rewarded as white made all the more time trouble mistakes, remarkably allowing black to pick up all the four white pawns. The game lasted until 82 moves and some five and a half hours, although black was totally winning for the last half an hour and four pawns up in the final position.

Dane **FM Casper Dahl Rasmussen (2244)** as white against the Norwegian junior **Peder Marcus Aamodt (1941)** started up with a positional Catalan opening, in which white came slightly better after regaining the pawn at c4. Offering a queen exchange at a6 was very strange from black, as white's much better structure later gave him a clear advantage with two rooks, one knight and seven pawns left on each side. In chess you must however keep your concentration, and Rasmussen here was instructively punished as he for one move was too careless ...

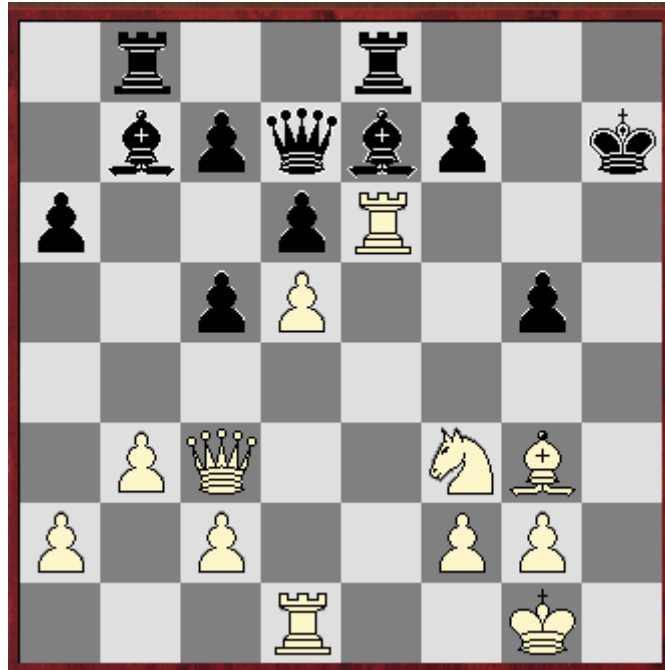


The natural 27.Rd2? here turned the position from clearly better to lost for white – as black immediately used his golden chance to win an exchange with 27... Ne5! followed by 28... Nf3+. Both players looked a bit shocked as white stopped the clock.

CM Akshit Kumar J (2172) as white against **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1985)** appeared to be badly prepared for a good old Sicilian Löwenthal variation, as black following an early queen exchange remained a pawn up with a much better position. Kumar J obviously had a bad day, and gave up one more pawn to reach a lost bishop endgame in which he blundered his bishop. 17 year old Gåsland however could be very well satisfied about this preparation and play in this game.

Aidas Juodziukynas (1893) versus **Rishi Vijayakumar (2156)** saw a Queen's Gambit Ragozin in which white first was slightly better. Black following an early queen exchange however got the help needed to take over the initiative, and white's position immediately collapsed after he blundered his key pawn at b2.

Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (2035) and **CM Andreas Skotheim (2214)** discussed another Ruy Lopez Morphy position, investigated further by some guy named Steinitz around 150 years ago. Black here weakened his kingside too much, allowing white to get a strong attack with a powerful 22.Re6! Skotheim realized he was in trouble and was happy to enter a repetition of moves immediately afterwards. Evenshaug according to the computers had a close to winning advantage and of course should have played on. His decision still was practically undestandable as the complications were truly not easy to work out over the board with some 23 minutes left on the clock.



Not an obviously drawn position, but the computer line starting with 26.Ne5!! was not easy to work out – try yourself.

15 year old Englishman **Indy Southcott-Moyers (2120)** as white against 31 year old Norwegian **Sondre Stai (1842)** went for a London system with 4.dxc5. His preparation here worked out very well as white was able to establish a dominant pawn at c5 with a big space advantage. Winning a pawn after the opening of course was no mistake and kept a clear advantage. Stai however fought on well into the queen endgame, and Soutcott-Moyers had remarkably difficulties finding any winning plan. The queen endgame after the first time control was rather blocked and white at move 47 accepted a draw by repetition of checks.

Our 15 year old new Panamanian chessfriend **Rion Okuno (1981)** did not appear to well prepared for a Sicilian Kalashnikov duel against 48 year older **Morten Andersen (2178)**, as black came slightly ahead on the board and some 20 minutes ahead on the clock. Veteran Andersen in an inspired mood first snatched a pawn at b2 and then started a dangerous kingside attack by marching forward to f3 and e3 with his pawns. Black in short won an exchange and reached a totally winning endgame well before 40 moves.



Andersen vs Okuno

Pantham Kaewpitakkun (1989) and **FM Vegar Koi Gandrud (2293)** discussed a creative Sicilian Najdorf sideline, in which white sacrifices a pawn in the air at e4 and castles long. Black following an early queen exchange remained a pawn up here, but white due to his pair of bishops, active rooks and pressure against black's isolated pawn at d5 still came better. White kept the more active pieces after winning back the pawn, and in the remaining rook and minor piece endgame he soon won two more pawns along black's loose seventh rank.



Kaewpitakkun vs Gandrud

Sacrificing the bishop to get rid of black's two final pawns was not necessary and gave black some chances to save the game. White however had the much more easy position and went on to win the endgame with rook and four pawns against rook and knight.

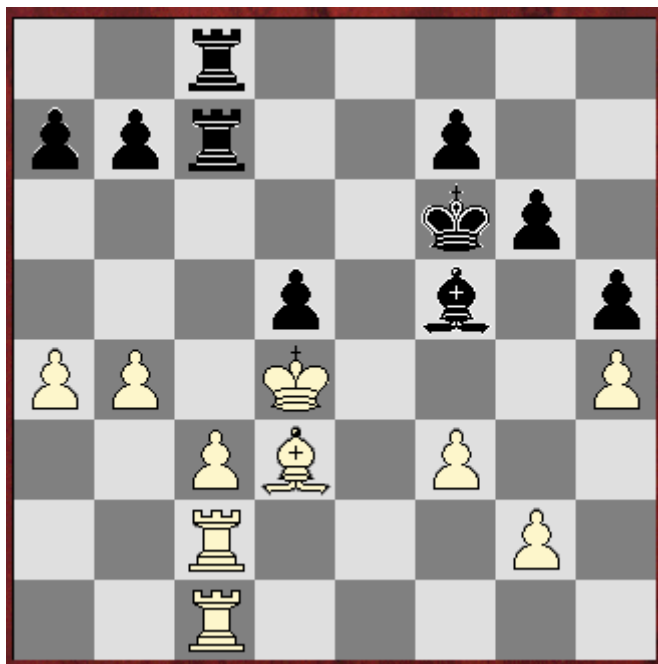
The Norwegian teenager duel between **Evsuld Mygmarsuren (2138)** and **Håvard Eriksen Bech (1951)** started up like a Caro-Kann Panov position in which black first did fine after snatching a pawn at d4. Black kept an extra pawn for many moves to come, but white kept a strong initiative and was rewarded as black under growing pressure after 25 moves blundered two minor pieces for a rook.



Valcu vs Skramstad

The young teenagers **Lavinia Valcu (2070)** and **Oda Kofoed Skramstad (1945)** today discussed the modern Rapport-Jobava-system with 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.e3 c6 5.h4, reaching an isolated queen's pawn position in which white first had a slight edge. Black came up with enough counterplay to balance the chances and after 32 moves could force a queen exchange – leaving an approximately balanced endgame with two rooks, bishop and six pawns on each side. Both players overlooked a tactical 36.--- d4+! Which could have won an exchange for black.

Black however efficiently used her chance for a tactical win at move 38:



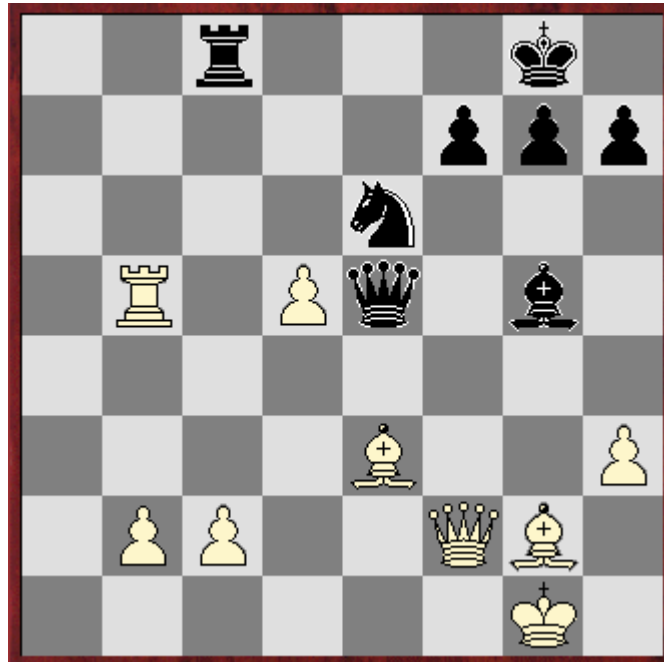
38.--- Rc4+! 39.Bxc4 Rxc4 and now 40.Kxd5? Be6 41.Kd6 Rc6 is mate, hence white had to try 40.Ke3 d4+! 41.Kd2 Bxc2 42.Rxc2 dxc3+ 43.Kd3. Black however came two pawns up in the rook endgame and Oda had no problems winning this.

Unpredictable **Per Fredrik Holand (2068)** as white against **Sebastian Lien (1885)** today went for a patient Colle opening. Black first equalized from the opening, but came a pawn down following a badly timed 11...c4?! Following this the players before 25 moves had reached a rooks and minor piece endgame in which white was a very sound pawn up. Holand due to his queenside pawn majority had no problems cashing in the full point.



Lien vs Holand

Fredrik Valstad Elsness (1873) versus **CM Joel Paul Ganta (1993)** was another Sicilian Najdorf duel. Something went wrong for black in this one, as white's pair of bishops combined with his mobile kingside pawns and black's weak pawn at b5 first gave him a clear plus. Black achieved some counterplay following a thematic d5-break, but white still came a pawn up with a clear advantage. The position after move 27 apparently was very messy, but 11 year old Elsness soon demonstrated that he had it all under control:



28.dxe6! Qxb5? (28... Qxe3 29.exf7+ Kf8 30.Qxe3 Bxe3+ 31.Kf1 Rxc2 32.Bd5 was needed, although hardly sufficient) 29.Qxf7+ Kh8 30.Bd4 Bh6 31.e7 Qb8 32.Be5 1-0

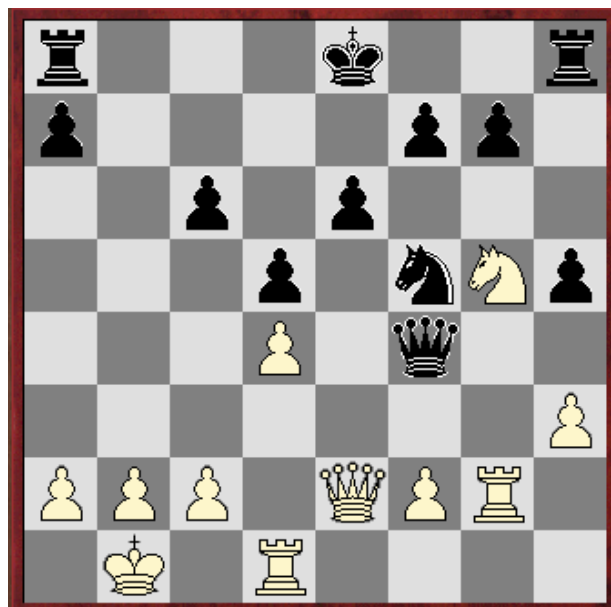
Finally, on board 50 today 13 year old Indian **WCM Sachi Jain (1992)** and 15 year old Armenian **Ani Avetisyan (1840)** discussed a rare Caro-Kann line in which white sacrificed a pawn to get a pair of bishops and open the h-file for her rook. Black after castling long was a pawn up with a slightly better position. White however still had fair chances until she just blundered a full rook with a much too fast 18.Rxh7?? – somehow overlooking that black after 18.--- Rxh7 19.Bxg6 could insert Rh1+ and then move her queen.



Jain vs Avetisyan

Open Group

The Open had an even more hard-fought round, as all the first seven boards had got a winner at the end of the day. Ukrainian veteran **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1789)** as white against third rated **Sigurd Kittilsen (1910)** on the first board had big problems from the opening, although black had made a very unconventional start with 1.d4 d5 2.Bf4 h5?! Black in the middle game made a good calculation to win a pawn:



20.--- Nxd4! 21.Rxd4 Qxd4 22.Nxe6 Qe4! 23.Qxe4 dxe4 24.Nc7+ Kd7 25.Nxa8 g6 26.c4 Rxa8. Black following this started up the rook endgame a sound pawn up. White however made all the better decisions in the fourth and fifth hour, and after 63 moved he had reached a trivially won endgame with rook and c-pawn versus rook.

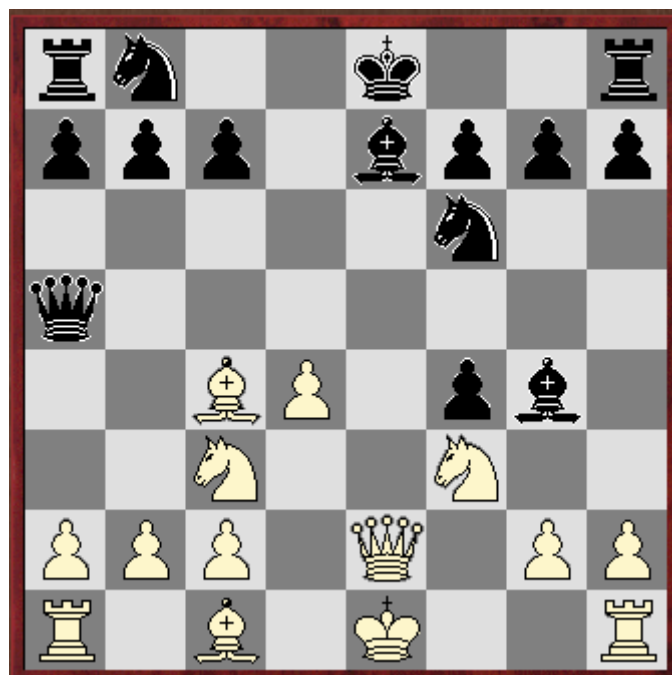
Second board had a more given winner as **Tim Spanton (1876)** got a winning initiative from the opening against **Ida Lahlum (1755)**, and after three hours he already had reached a winning pawn endgame.

20 year old **Amund Pihl Strand (1860)** as black on the third board needed somewhat more time, but also dominated the board and won well deserved as black against highly talented **Sophie Damiano (1691)**.

Fourth board between **Jan Ove Odden (1723)** and **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1963)** was fairly balanced from the opening, but top rated Hausken efficiently used his chance to win a pawn with a tactical 17.--- Nxe5 and later had few problems winning the endgame.

Fifth board also had an expected win for the higher rated player as solid **Morten Rolstad (1879)** soon came much better as black against our new Indian Chessfriend **Thalaimalal Mahendran (1681)**.

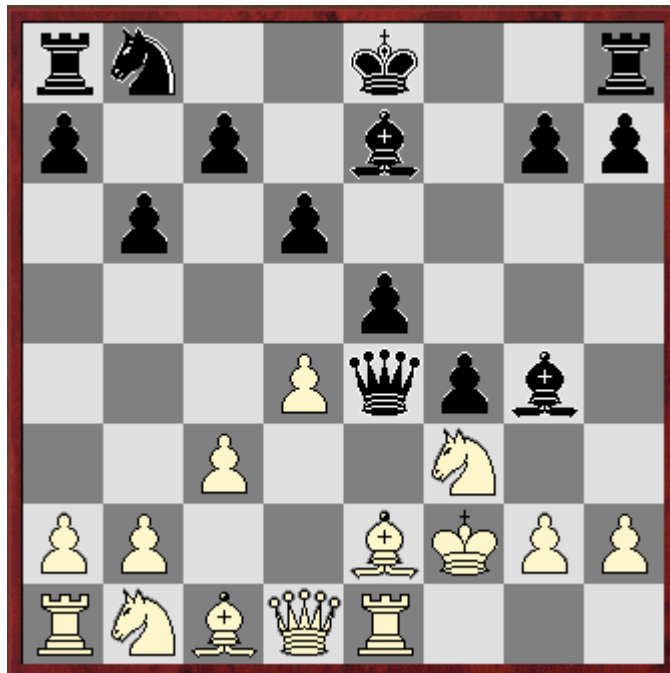
Mahendran's travel companion **Reddy Sushrutha (1707)** on the other hand won slightly surprisingly against **Kazim Yilmaz (1805)** following a classical bishop sacrifice:



9.Bxf7+! Kxf7 10.Ne5+ Ke8 11.Nxg4 Nxg4 12.Qxg4 with a big plus for white.

Another medium surprise was **Alina Shehzad (1670)** winning as black against **Hafsteinn Agustsson (1825)**. This was a tense five-hour battle in which Alina outplayed her opponent in the last third of the game, demonstrating a winning attack with queen and rook versus queen and rook. 13 year old Alina at 2,5/3 following this is ahead in the run for the best female prize here.

Today's happy sensation man on the lower boards was **David Kristiansen (1625)**, defeating second rated **Ståle Sending (1959)** after only 12 moves. Sending even more remarkably lost the game on time, but white following a dubious sacrifice from black had won a piece for a pawn with a winning position.



Strand, Spanton and Kuzmenko following all this are sharing the lead at 3,0/3, half a point ahead of Hausken, Sushrutha, Rolstad and Shehzad. We look forward to an exciting round four with Strand white against Spanton and Hausken white against Kuzmenko on the top boards.

Photos by Tom Eriksen