

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2024

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

4



GM Group

The first half of the double round made a slightly disappointing start, as the first board duel between GM Ido Gorshtein of Israel and GM Rinat Jumabayev of Kazakhstan finished a draw within half an hour. The fourth board duel between GM Kaido Kulaots and IM Linus Johansson lasted three hours longer, but also was a fairly safe draw. All the four other top six games however got a winner: Fourth rated GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly efficiently used his chance to win the endgame as black against the young sensation man FM Saad Elmi, while GM Frode Urkedal by a nice attack defeated IM Edvin Trost in the Scandinavian duel on third board. The fifth board also went in favour of the home country as IM Jens Evang Ingebretsen snatched a pawn and went on to win the endgame as black against German IM Tobias Kölle. Indian IM Mohapatra Sidhant on the sixth board dominated the game against the young American IM Nico Chasin, and decided a long battle with an elegant combination.

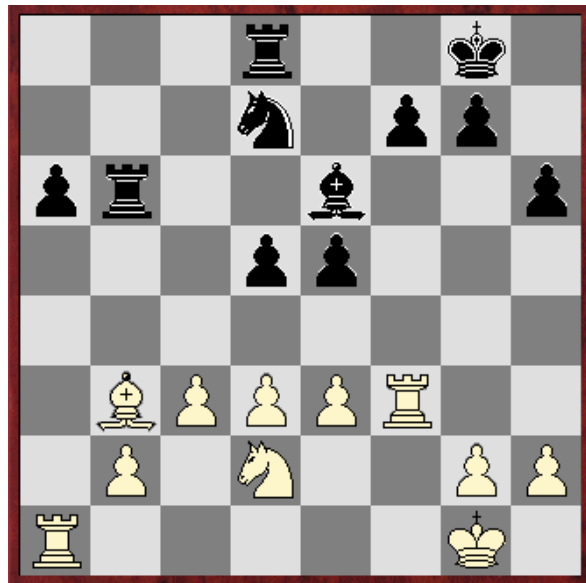
On the lower boards we noted a number of surprising draws and two more or less sensational wins: 17 year old FM Ritvik Krishnan joined the IM-norm run as he well deserved succeeded in winning a long queen and minor piece endgame against stumbling GM Prraneeth Vuppala, while long travelling CM John Stark of New Zealand efficiently used his chance to defeat an opponent rated some 350 points higher when FM Shazil Shehzad blundered a rook.

Ganguly following all this is the only player at 4,0/4, leading alone half a point ahead of Jumabayev, Gorshtein, Urkedal, Ingebretsen and Sidhant. Top rated GM Abhimanyu Puranik is still a full point behind first prize, but moved closer to the top boards as he today won a very drawish endgame against the young Turk IM Hasan Huseyin Celik.

Round 4 also lasted approximately six full hours, and the new top board pairings came up only one and a half hour before the start of round 5: GM Ganguly white against GM Gorshtein, GM Jumabayev white against IM Sidhant and IM Ingebretsen white against GM Urkedal.

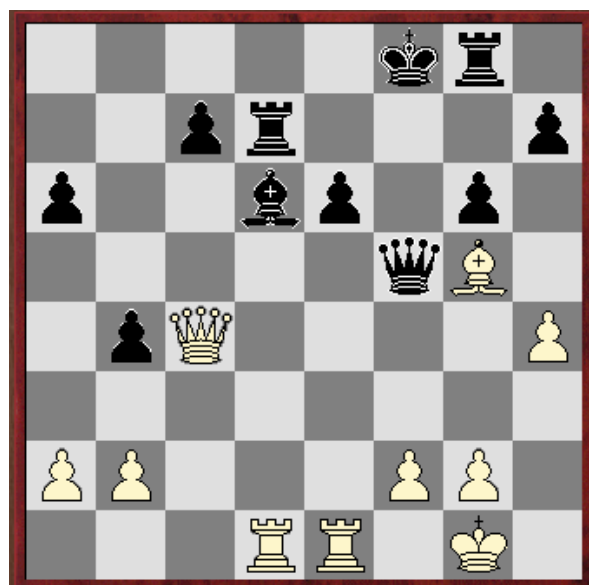
GM Ido Gorshtein (2539) versus GM Rinat Jumabayev (2598) was agreed a draw after 14 moves in a fairly balanced Queen's Gambit.

The second board duel between **FM Saad Elmi (2344)** and **GM Surya Shektar Ganguly (2574)** started up like an Italian opening, in which black had no problems equalizing. Following a queen exchange at d8, chances after 20 moves still were about balanced.



22.Ra5? however was much too careless, allowing a tactical 22... e4! which won a pawn after 23.Rf1 exd3 24.Bxd5 Rxb2 26.Bxe6 fxe6. Ganguly later had no problems winning the double rook endgame.

GM Frode Urkedal (2536) versus **IM Edvin Trost (2432)** saw another Open Ruy Lopez. Black came far ahead on the clock, and in a fairly open position first was fine after exchanging one set of knights and the light-squared bishops. 16... Rd8? however was a careless mistake, allowing white to play 17.Ne4! Qxe5 18.Bg5! with a strong attack against the black king at e8. White instead went for 18.Ng5?!, but still came better. 23... Bd6? was a serious misunderstanding from black, as 24.Bh6! ruled out chances for a much needed short castle. Following this white soon had a decisive attacking blow:



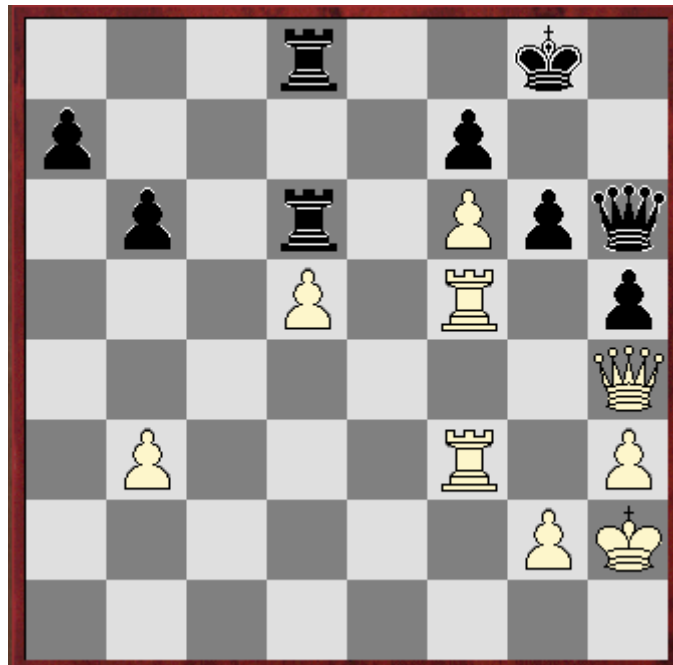
30.Rxe6 Qb5? 31.Re8+! Kxe8 32.Qxg8+ Bf8 33.Re1+ and 1-0

IM Linus Johansson (2427) and **GM Kaido Kulaots (2534)** discussed a Queen's Gambit Exchange line in which three sets of minor pieces and the queens left early. White later hoped for an edge due to his knight at d4, but black's bishop was fairly active and he had enough counterplay against the isolated white pawn at c3. Draw was agreed by a sensible repetition just before 40 moves.



Kulaots vs Johansson

IM Tobias Kölle (2460) versus **IM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2402)** was a Queen's Gambit Semi-Tarrasch in which time spending and the position both were approximately in balance after one set of knights plus the dark-squared bishops were exchanged. White had a center pawn at e4 and a well-placed bishop at d5, while black as a long term asset had a two against one pawn majority on the queenside. A tense heavy pieces battle on the kingside followed with both players running short of time. White tried to attack the black king, while black tried to win the advanced white pawns at d5 and f6. In the final moves before the time control, black made the better calculations:



Now 38. Rg3! was needed, as 38.Qg3? Rxd5 39.Rxd5 Rxd5 40.Re3 Rf5 left black a pawn up with a much better position. Black succeeded in winning a borderline rook endgame starting after 41.Re8+ Kh7 42.Qb8 Qf4+ 43.Qxf4 Rxf4 44.Re7 Rxf6 45.Rxa7.

IM Mohapatra Sidhant (2379) and **IM Nico Chasin (2447)** entered a Sicilian Alapin line leading to a symmetrical center, as white had an isolated pawn at d4 and black an isolated pawn at d5. The pair of bishops first gave black a slight edge here.

While black struggled to find a plan, white however advanced his h-pawn up to h6 and got some attack on the dark kingside squares. The outcome was still open after 40 moves, but white had the much safer king and one hour later decided the game neatly by trapping black's rook in an open file:



55.b3! Rc3 56.Rxe6+ fxe6 57.Qxe6 Kb5 58.Qe2+ Kc6 59.Qd2 and 1-0 due to 59.--- Rxb3 60.Qc2+.

IM Jonah B. Willow (2446) versus **IM Sambit Panda (2377)** saw a lively Caro-Kann Advance duel, in which black played hardball on the kingside with f6 followed by both g5 and e5.

White after 18 moves was ahead on the clock as well as on the board, although the position remained tense and double-edged. During mutual time trouble both players made some inaccuracies, but the position at least from a practical perspective remained roughly balanced.

Willow at move 40 creatively sacrificed an exchange, leaving a drawish if still interesting endgame with rook, two knights and three pawns versus two rooks, knight and one pawn. The 21 year old Englishman during mutual time pressure in the sixth hour played on for a win with rook, knight and two scattered pawns against two rooks. Panda although down to seconds on the clock probably had the defence line under control. At move 70 he sacrificed back an exchange to reach a fairly easily drawn endgame with rook versus rook and d-pawn.

GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2618) and **IM Hasan Huseyin Celik (2417)**

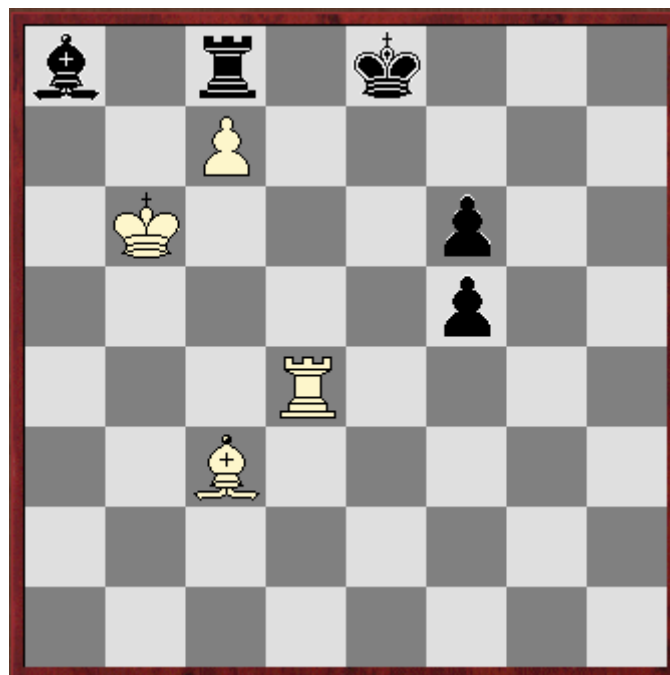
entered a very double-edged French Winawer duel, in which white sacrificed a pawn in the center to get the pair of bishops and a passed h-pawn. Both players obviously had a preparation here and black soon returned his extra pawn at c3 to force an exchange of queens.

The preparation worked out fairly well from a black point of view, as he after 32 moves had eliminated the white h-pawn and defended into an endgame with rook, bishop, knight and c-pawn versus rook, bishop,

knight and two f-pawns. For sure this was a draw, but the 2600-GM had the passed pawn and played on for a win. During mutual time pressure white before 40 moves marched his passed pawn up to c7, but the draw still appeared obvious as black had his rook on the c8 square. Black however failed to reorganize his defence in time, and white got a winning position as his king reached the b6 square. Black's pawn at f5 here was a problem for himself, as that square was not available for the bishop.



Celik vs Puranik

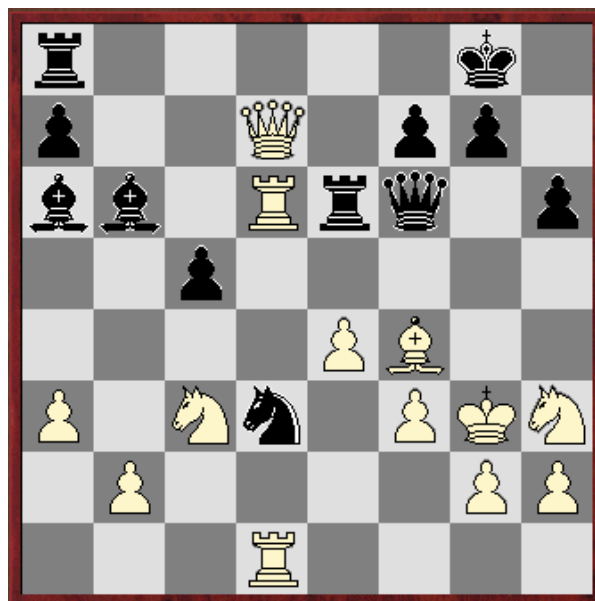


50.Rd2 f4 51.bxf6 Kf7 52.Bh4 – and black resigned due to 52.--- Be4 53.Rd8 Bf5 54.Kb7.

GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2578) as white in a Nimzo-Indian against **IM Mai Narva (2399)** played hard for a win with 4.f3. White was allowed to put his queen at d5 with pressure against the black pawns at c5 and d7, but black's pair of bishops at a6 and a5 made it difficult for white to castle. Sasikiran in a jumpy mood instead played Kf2 followed by Kg3. The GM eventually won the pawn at d7, but the position remained very double-edged due to white's open king.

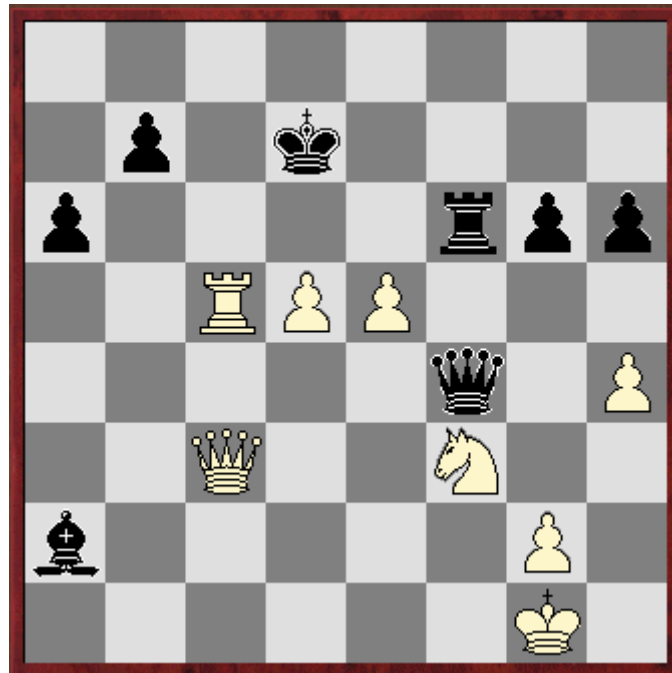


Sasikiran vs Narva



Sasikiran creatively but dubiously gave up his two rooks for three minor pieces with 20.R1xd3 Bxd3 21.Rxb6 Rxb6 22.Qxd3 Rxb2, leaving a position in which he had two minutes against 12 minutes on the clock with a position the computer programs gave as -2. The position however was easier to play for white and Narva too soon ran short of time. Sasikiran outplayed his opponent during the next 15 moves and after the time control had reached a won position with queen, bishop, knight and four pawns against queen, rook and four pawns. White within eight more moves completed his attack against the black king.

GM Raja Rithvik R (2532) via 1.Nf3 transposed into an English opening as white against **IM Ameya Audi (2378)**. Black got a pair of bishops but had to delay his short castling, and following this ran into some problems in the c-file. More or less in desperation black gave up his pawn at e7, but white following this came a pawn up with safer king and all the more active pieces. White soon was ready to advance his center pawns forward against the black king, and black resigned in a shipwreck position after 32.e5.



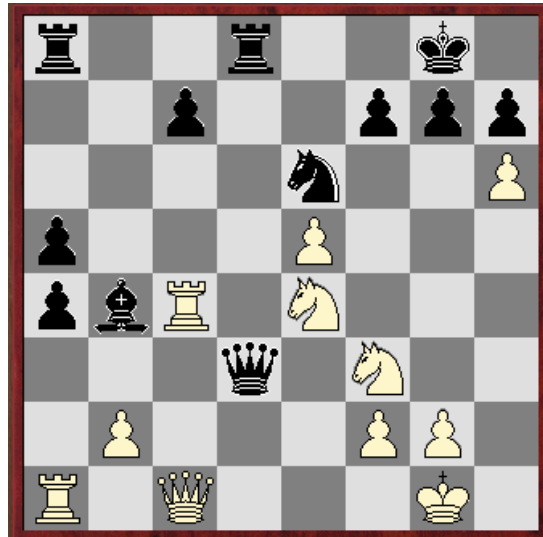
The final position in Rithvik - Audi

IM Sebastian Mihajlov (2373) and **GM Pranav Anand (2519)** tested out the double-edged Lipnitsky attack in a Sicilian Najdorf. Black came well ahead on the clock. His preparation still appeared dubious, as white after 15 moves had a promising kingside attack coming up on the board. White finally castled long after 20 moves, while black still kept his king at e8. Mihajlov burned much time without finding anything and gave up two pawns for very loose compensation. Black following this could safely exchange off the queens and enter a rook and minor pieces endgame which was practically winning due to his extra pawn and pair of bishops.



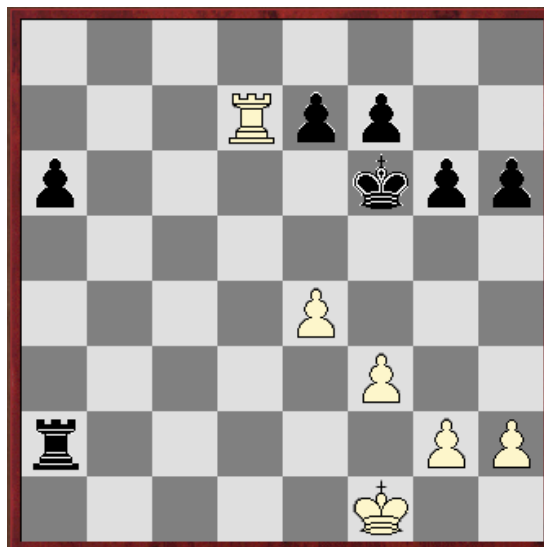
Sebastian Mihajlov

The Swedish duel between **GM Erik Blomqvist (2511)** and **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2350)** started up as an open Ruy Lopez in which black first did fairly well and after 20 moves had reached a roughly balanced position. The IM however underestimated the dangers related to his opponents flying h-pawn, and following this he made a tactical blunder while trying to exchange more minor pieces:



23.--- Nd4?? 24.Rxd4! Rxd4 25.Qg5 Bf8 26.Nf6+! Kh8 27.Nxd4 Qxd4 28.hxg7+ Bxg7 29.Ra3 and white's attack soon prevailed.

The game between **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2336)** and **IM Isik Can (2493)** started up as a symmetrical English, but soon opened up and became rather unbalanced. White first had a big center, but black successfully undermined it. Tactical exchanges left white with a pair of bishops, but black kept a loose extra pawn at d2 all the way into the double rook endgame. White's decision to eliminate the pawn at d2 here might have been objectively correct, but he still faced a difficult defence with rook and four pawns versus rook and five pawns afterwards.



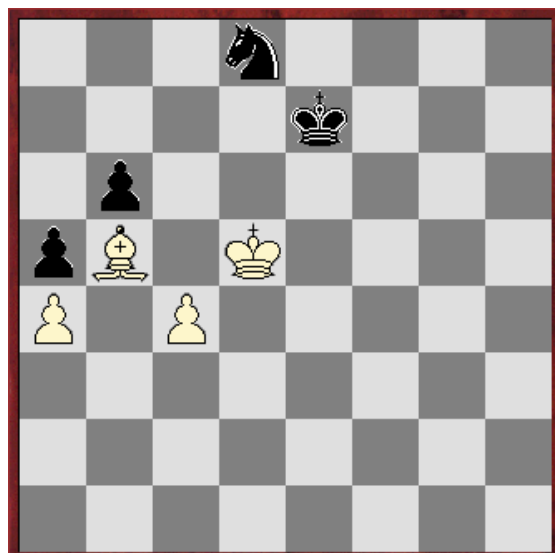
Black instructively advanced his pawn to a3 and then gave up a pawn on the kingside to activate his king – forcing white to give up his rook after 57 moves.

IM Semen Mitusov (2487) versus **IM Moksh Doshi (2353)** was a main line of Sicilian Moscow, leading to a very Sicilian position in which white had some pressure against the backward pawn at d6. Black had enough counterplay on the queenside and against the white pawn at e4 to balance the chances, and draw was agreed by a fairly sound repetition shortly before the first time control.

English **IM Ameet Ghasi (2485)** gave his King's Indian Advance another try as white against 13 year old Norwegian **FM Håvard Haug (2341)**. He again reached a symmetrical center with a white pawn at e4 versus a black pawn at e5. Black by spectators was considered better as he could exchange the queens and snatch the pawn at e4, but white according to the computers had full compensation due to his more active pieces. Black had a struggle to complete his development and gradually forced himself to give up both his remaining kingside pawns. The remaining endgame with rook, bishop, knight and four pawns against rook, bishop, knight and three pawns was a borderline case. Opposite-coloured bishops here improved black's chances for a draw, hence his decision to exchange the bishop for white's knight was strange. Ghasi in turn later spent much time and chose a mistaken plan in the minor piece endgame. Black following this finally had the draw within short reach after five and a half hour, but chess can be difficult also in positions with few pieces left ...



Haug vs Ghasi



Moving the king away from the pawns with 66.--- Kf6! 67.Kd6 Ne6 68.Kc6 Ke5 69.Kxb6 Kd4! 70.Kxa5 Kc5 71.Ka6 Nd4! 72.a5 Nb3 now could have been a study-like draw. Black instead lost his remaining two pawns and the game after 66.--- Ne6? 67.Kc6 Nc5 68.Kxb6 Kd6 69.Kxa5 Kc7 70.Be8 Nb7+ 71.Kb4 Kb6 72.Bh5.

Israeli **IM Yahli Sokolovsky (2475)** and Norwegian **FM Gunnar Lund (2335)** discussed one of the French Advance lines in which black has two bishops and two h-pawns. Black due to his bishops came closer to winning chances in a long and dynamic game with many tactical exchanges. The 17 year old IM however defended well, and after five hours had his half point fairly under control in an endgame with bishop, knight and two pawns against two bishops and two pawns.

FM Nicolai Kistrup (2324) versus **GM Tiger Hillarp (2473)** was a Sicilian Kan duel in which white first had a slight pressure and then won a pawn at b5. White after 30 moves was a pawn up with two passed pawns at a3 and b4, but still had a long way to win as black had active pieces and white's king was a bit open. The GM was under pressure for several hours in this game, but it seems that white never had any clearcut win. The remaining white passed pawn after five and a half hours reached a6, but then black could force a draw by repeating checks between e3 and f3 with his queen.



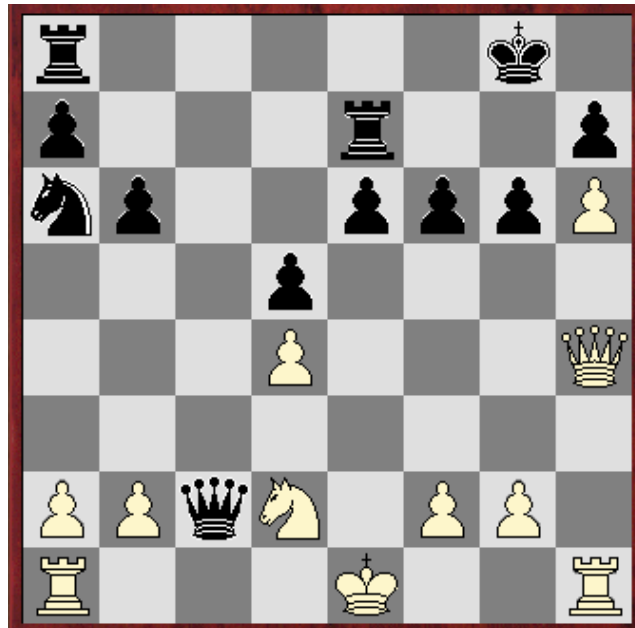
Hillarp vs Kistrup

The Norwegian hit man duel between **IM Frode Elsness (2437)** and **Sergey Eliseev (2131)** was an Open Catalan in which black could complete his development and more or less equalized after exchanging the c- and d-pawns. White through a steam of exchanges kept a slight edge into the endgame with rook, knight and five pawns against rook, bishop and five pawns, but black by simple means could force an exchange of the last queenside pawns. Draw agreed upon white's suggestion after 43 moves, as a dead rook endgame which four kingside pawns for each player was about to occur.

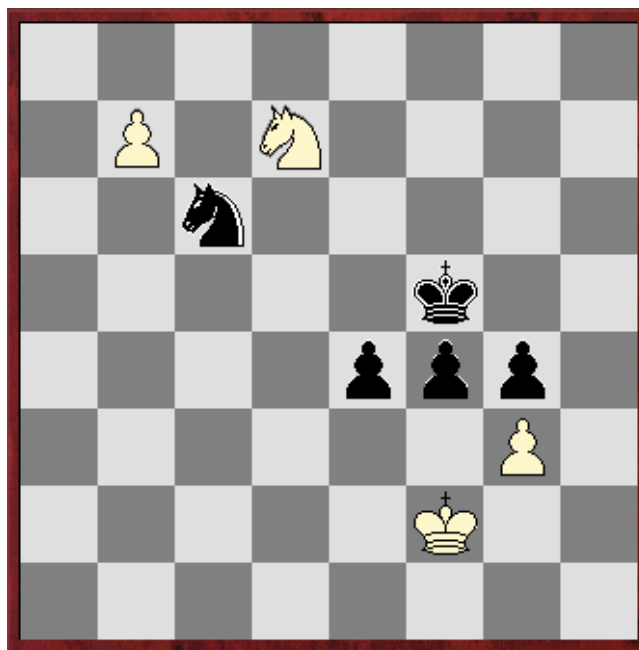
Norwegian **IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2454)** and Israeli **FM Roy Vagman (2311)** investigated a London system in which white advanced a pawn up to h6 without finding much of an attack. Consequently black after exchanging the light-squared bishops could open the queenside with an advantage. Snatching a pawn at c2 in move 13 was inaccurate according to the computers, an white for a few moves had sufficient counterplay on the kingside.



Kvaløy vs Vagman



White's decision not to take back the pawn with 19.Qxf6 however was strange, as 19.Nb3? Qe4+ 20.Qxe4 dxe4 left black a pawn up with an obviously big advantage in the rooks and knight endgame. Black struggled to find an active plan afterwards and allowed white some counterplay in the c-file. After the first time control he still succeeded in exchanging the remaining rook and reach a promising knight endgame with six versus five pawns. The FM first handled this better than the IM and after 60 moves had reached a won position. Moving the king to f5 instead of d5 two moves later however qualified as a blunder, since white's passed b-pawn suddenly became disturbing. With two minutes left on his clock, Kvaløy still kept his concentration and balanced into a draw:

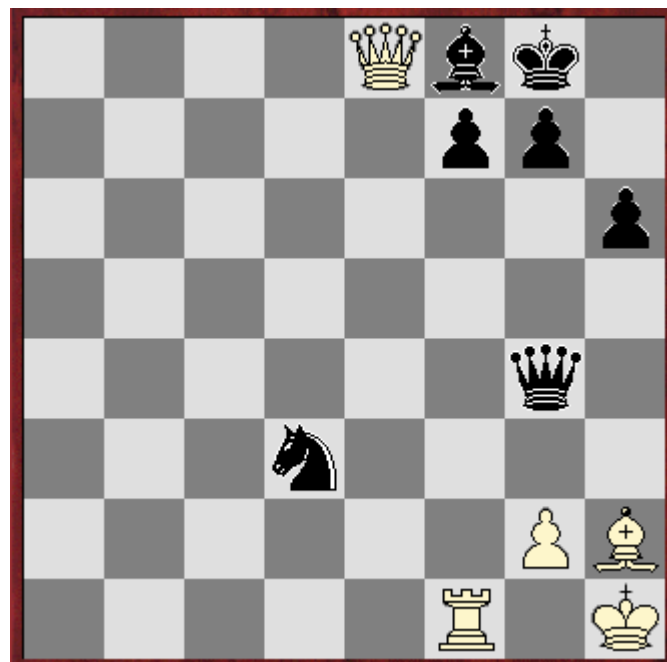


69.b8Q Nxb8 70.Nxb8 e3+ 71.Ke2 Ke4 72.Nd7 fxg3 73.Nc5+ Kd4 74.Nc5 Kd5 76.Nd3 – and black had to accept a draw due to 76.--- g2 77.Nf4+ Ke4 78.Nxg2.

The chess queen duel between **IM Stavroula Tsolakidou (2424)** and **WGM Pallathur Nandhidhaa (2305)** saw a Pirc opening in which white first had a space advantage and then went for a direct attack with 23.e5!? fxe5 24.fxe5 Nd5 25.e6. Black decided to sacrifice a rook for a bishop and the e-pawn. White later had a small material advantage, but black's pair of bishops and better pawn structure gave her close to enough compensation. After the first time control white had too few pawns left and the game was soon drawn by an instructive perpetual check.

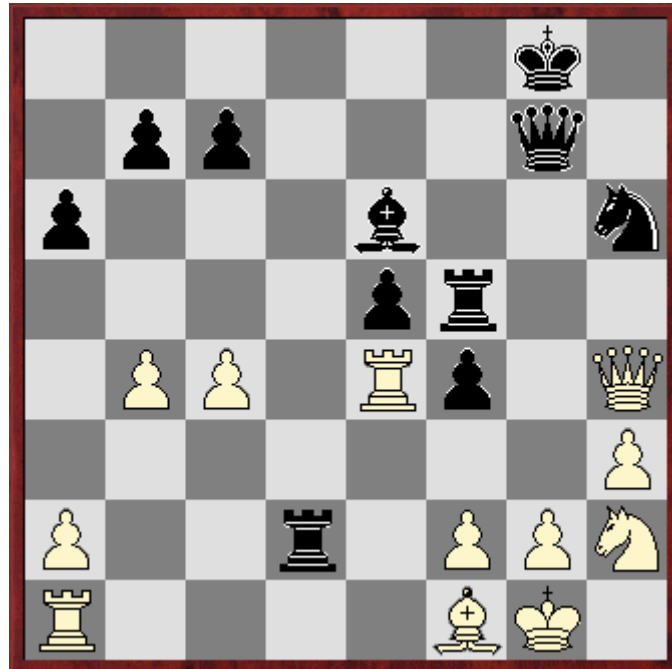


Tsolakidou vs Nandhidhaa



45.--- Nf2+ with a draw – as white's options now were 46.Kg1 Nh3+ 47.Kh1 Nf2+ etc or 46.Rxf2 Qd1+ 47.Bg1 Qh5+ 48.Bh2 Qd1+ 49.Bg1 etc.

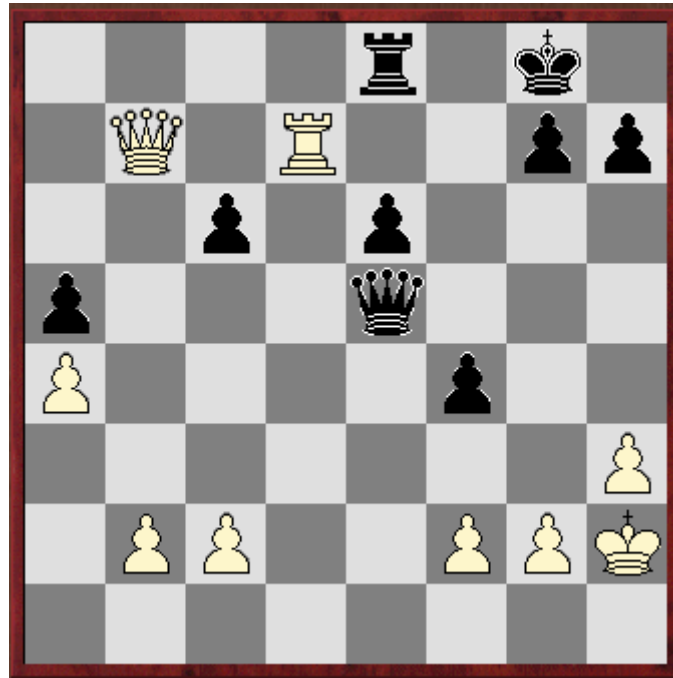
IM Elham Amar (2567) versus **Sondre Melaa (2285)** saw a classical Italian duel in which white had the better prospects on the queenside, while black after castling short went for a double-edged kingside attack. White hit back on the kingside and was a pawn up with a better position when black allowed a nice combination:



26.Nf3 Rb2? 27.Nd4! Rf6 28.Rxe5 and white won within a few more moves.

The young Indian duel between **FM Ritvik Krishnan (2277)** and **GM Prraneeth Vuppala (2506)** started up as a Sicilian Najdorf, in which white kept a very slight pressure in a rather closed position after exchanging one rook, one bishop, one knight and one pawn. Vuppala short of time made a big decision with 40... f5?, giving up a key pawn at c5. Krishnan took the pawn and came better but made some mistakes during the fifth hour, allowing black after 54 moves to reach a drawish endgame with queen, bishop and two pawns against queen, knight and three pawns. Vuppala however again had less than one minute left on the clock and soon blundered his key pawn at a6. White following this had a won (if still a bit airy) position, and definitely decided the game by forcing a queen exchange after 66 moves.

Bulgarian **GM Momchil Petkov (2500)** although solid is still struggling to win games, and today had another draw as white against Norwegian **FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2277)**. White following a rather tame Sicilian Kan opening came much better in the middle game, as he after exchanging all the minor pieces could occupy the d-file with a powerful initiative. The GM however became too lighthanded in a close to winning position:



White here should have spent one move for the prophylactic 28.f3!, as 28.Qxc6? f3+ 29.g3 Qe1 30.Qxf3 Rf8 31.Rd1 Qxf2+ won back two pawns and exchanged it down to a drawn queen endgame.

Swede **IM Hampus Sörensen (2428)** on the other hand finally succeeded in winning a game as white against Englishman **FM James Moreby (2260)**. Following an early queen exchange, white due to his pair of bishops got a promising pressure from this Bogo-Indian opening. Black however was well inside the ring until he at move 31 blundered a piece.

12 year old **Rishi Vijayakumar (2156)** as white against **FM Yuval Yaniv (2368)** made a speedy start with 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.h4, reaching a King's Indian position in which white sacrificed his h-pawn to open the h-file for his rook. Yaniv in a Benkö gambit style opened the queenside and soon had the more dangerous attack. Well before 40 moves black landed safely in a queen and minor pieces endgame with an extra piece.



Vijayakumar vs Yaniv

The Norwegian junior champion **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2215)** remarkably remains undefeated, today scoring his fourth draw as black against **FM Theodor Kenneskog (2358)**.

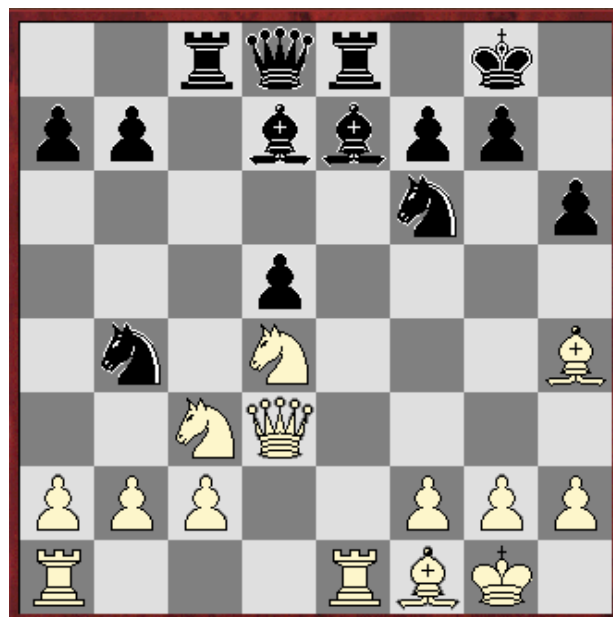
White first did not have much from this rather closed and positional Ruy Lopez opening, but in the fourth hour established a positional pressure and eventually won a pawn at a4 shortly before move 40. Kreken however fought on stubbornly and early in the sixth hour crawled into a drawn endgame with knight and three kingside pawns against knight and two kingside pawns.



Kreken vs Kenneskog

FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2351) and **Martin Øksendal (2086)** both had a great speed in their Catalan opening, and following some tactical exchanges they after 18 moves had reached a drawish position with rook, two knights and five pawns on each side. Black however soon forced himself to give up the isolated and passed pawn at c4, and white following this had a sound extra pawn. Black's defence here became somewhat easier as white had no pawns left in the a-, b- or c-file, and probably this endgame should have been the draw. White however had all the possibilities on the board and some 45 minutes more on the clock. In short Øksendal despite his speedy start ran seriously short of time and made several mistakes, allowing Nielsen to exchange the black pawn at h7 and win the game due to his passed h-pawn.

The Indian duel between **IM Dushyant Sharma (2331)** and **WFM Shivika Rohilla (2003)** was a Sicilian more or less transposing into a French. This position with an isolated black pawn at d5 was approximately balanced – but then suddenly the IM blundered:



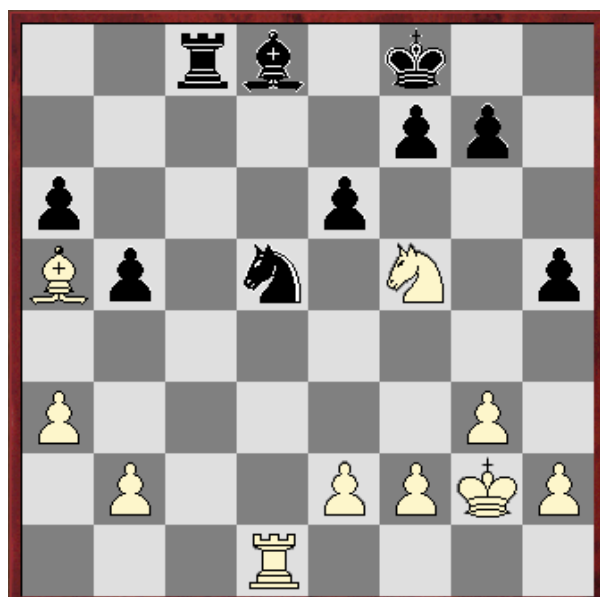
15.Qf3? g5! 16.Qg3 Nh5 17.Qf3 Nf6 18.Qg3 Kh8 and white had to sacrifice his bishop for two pawns with 19.Bxg5. The position still of course was not easy to play for black, and the game was more entertaining than impressive. White a few moves later suddenly had a winning attack but failed to find the best continuation. Following this black with a knight for two pawns again was clearly better when a draw was agreed by repetition after 33 moves. Rohilla obviously could be well satisfied with the result of this black game, while the only good thing to say about Sharma's white game here was that he did not lose it.

WCM Anishka Vikram (1995) of India and **IM Helge A Nordahl (2330)** of Norway tested out the legendary Noteboom line of a Semi-Slav, in which black snatches a pawn with 4... dxc4. White left the critical main line with 8.Ne5 and soon won back the pawn at c6, with roughly balanced chances. Black later creatively sacrificed a piece to establish a dangerous passed pawn at b3. White struggled to complete her development and had to sacrifice back a bishop for the black b-pawn, after which a balanced rook and minor piece endgame soon was agreed a draw.



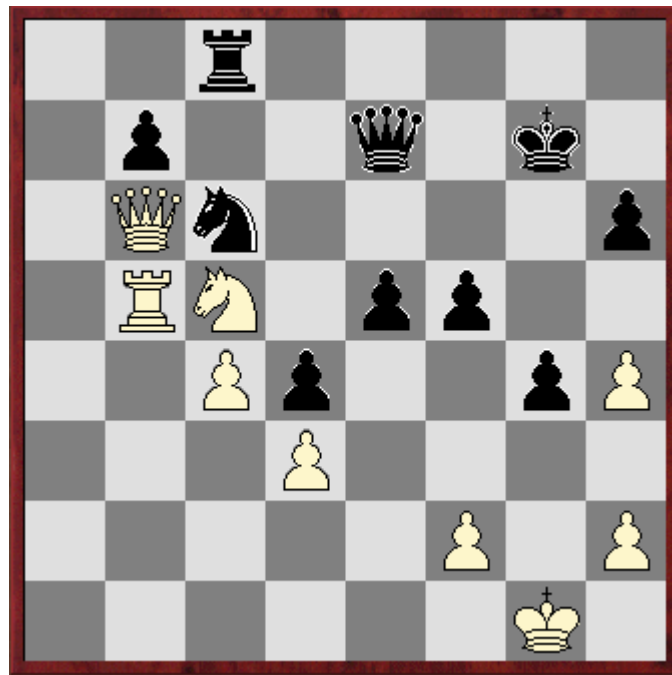
Anishka Vikram

Lukas Dominik Gåslund (1985) and **IM Erik Hedman (2311)** discussed a Catalan-like Queen's Indian fianchetto line which Kasparov popularized in the early eighties. Hedman had no problems to equalize, but following a steam of sound exchanges the position with rook, bishop, knight and six pawns on each side after 25 moves was very drawish. Hedman played on and was rewarded as white soon overstretched his pieces:



26.Nd6? Rc6 27.Nb7 Bxa5 28.Nxa5 Rc2 and black suddenly won a pawn with a close to winning advantage in the rook and knight endgame. Gåsland following this anyway was in deep trouble when he at move 36 blundered an exchange and stopped the clock.

CM John Stark (1947) versus **FM Shazil Shehzad (2301)** saw a King's Indian Advance in which white played too carelessly, inviting black to snatch a pawn at b4. Stark later fought on well and much later got about enough activity for the pawn. Around move 30 black was still a pawn up, but chances were about balanced as black's remaining three pieces all had to protect his weak pawn at b7. Probably hoping to put pressure upon white with six minutes against three on the clock, Shehzad himself made some kind of time trouble blunder:



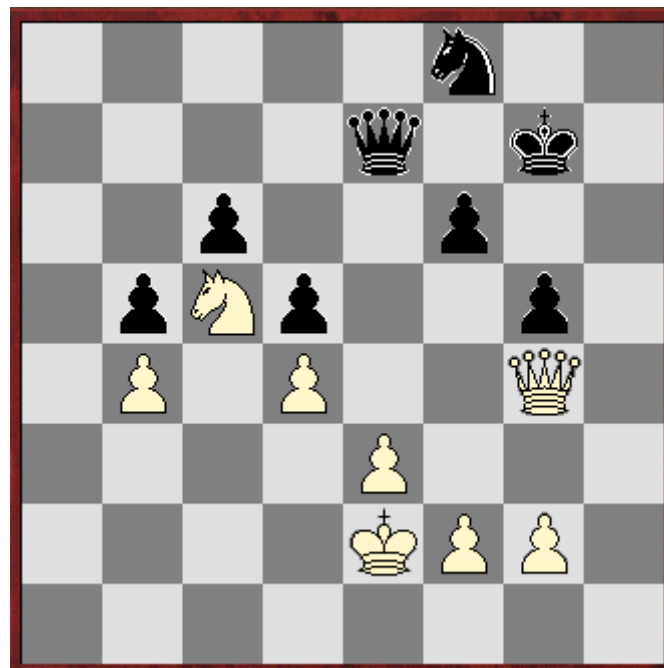
33.--- Rc7?? 34.Qxc7! and black resigned due to 34.--- Qxc7 35.Ne6+ Kf6 36.Nxc7. 36 year old Stark has dropped below 2000 following some disappointing results from the last year, but now at 2,5/4 our most long-travelling guest definitely seems to be back on his chess track.

Peder Marcus Aamodt (1941) and **FM Daakshin Arun (2283)** both spent a lot of time from a rare Scotch opening line today. White castled long and tried to open the kingside, but achieved only a stream of exchanges. After 40 moves he was a pawn down with queen, rook and three pawns against queen, rook and four pawns. Black's open king however made it risky for him to play for a win. White was about to win back the pawn with a slightly better position when a draw was suddenly agreed after 51 moves.

Swedish **GM Stellan Brynell (2406)** today had the white pieces in a Queen's Gambit Ragozin line against Norwegian junior **Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (2035)**. White kept an edge from the opening and into the endgame, but after 30 moves the position with queen, knight and six pawns on each side still appeared drawish. The GM circled around for 15 moves, but efficiently used the chance when he got it:



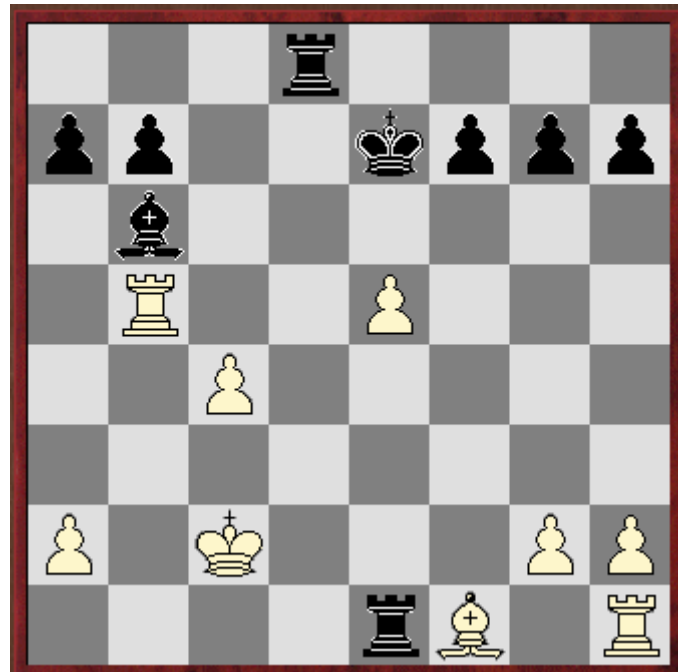
Evenshaug vs Brynell



49.--- Qc7 50.Qe6! Kg6?! 51.Qe8+ Kg7 52.Qxf8+! 1-0

Isak Vinh Brattgjerd (2228) as white in a Sicilian against **Per Fredrik Holand (2068)** went for a closed and slow set up, helpfully exchanging his dark-squared bishop for a knight at f6. Black wisely decided to keep his pair of bishops by putting the dark-squared one at g5, and soon was ready to realize the thematic f5-break with a promising kingside attack coming up. As black later had played e4 he put his knight on the d3 outpost. White understandably felt forced to sacrifice an exchange upon the octopus knight, but black kept the more dangerous attack and during the fourth hour gradually opened the kingside against white's king. White succeeded in avoiding a direct mate by exchanging off the queens, but then black's extra exchange and pair of bishops combined with the passed a-pawn of course won the endgame safely. In short this probably was a very good black game from Holand, but definitely is was a very lame white game from such a talented and capable player as Brattgjerd.

Shadi Sian (2076) as white in a Slav against **FM Fredrik Lindh (2256)** went for a safe symmetrical exchange line with 3.cxd5, but still ran into problems as he allowed a powerful center break with 9...e5! Black some moves later sacrificed a pawn, but regained it with a promising initiative in the rooks and bishop endgame. Shadi however got the necessary help and succeeded with his active defence:



23.c5! Rdd1 24.cxb6 Rc1+ 25.Kd2 a6 26.Rc5 Red1 27.Ke2 Re1+ 28.Kd2 ½-½

CM Andreas Skotheim (2214) today had the white pieces in a Sicilian Moscow against **Pantham Kaewpitakkun (1989)**. White first exchanged the light-squared bishops on d7 and then set up a Maroczy Bind with a safe edge for white. Black after 16 moves had exchanged all the knights and had a rather solid if slightly worse position.

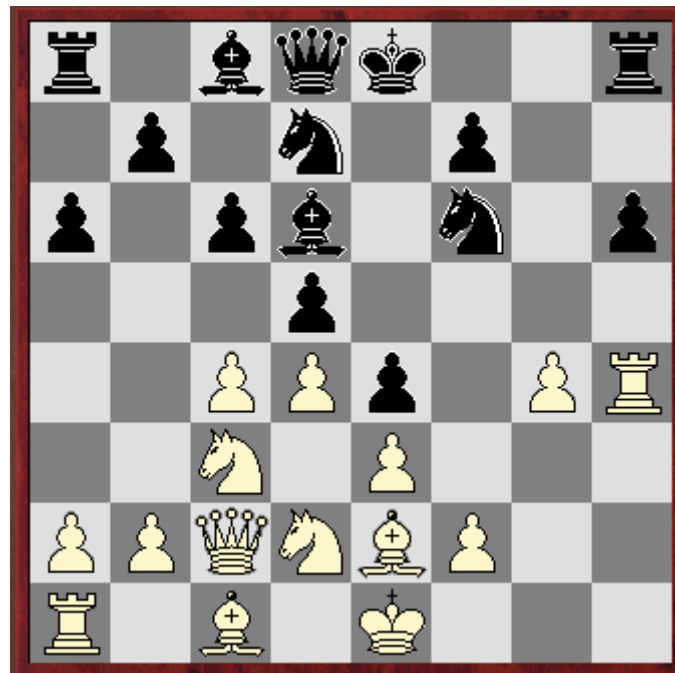
17...b5? here however was a serious misunderstanding as white after an instructive 18.cxb5 axb5 19.a5! already had a dangerous passed pawn and a decisive advantage. Within a few more moves black had to sacrifice an exchange to get rid of white's passed pawn. Soundly playing Skotheim later had no problems realizing his material advantage with queen and rook versus queen and bishop.



Skotheim vs Kaewpitakkun

WIM Ioulia Makka (1983) versus **Aniruddh Chatterjee (2182)** for three hours was a rather tense and positionally messy Sicilian Najdorf duel. Black gradually took over the initiative, and following a strong exchange sacrifice he well before move 40 had a decisive attack against the white king.

The young Norwegian teenager duel between **Oda Kofoed Skramstad (1945)** and **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2138)** saw a Semi-Slav Anti-Meran opening line in which black first did fine. In this opening the b5 advance is rather natural, but here it was a serious mistake – and the 13 year old white player was ready to demonstrate why:

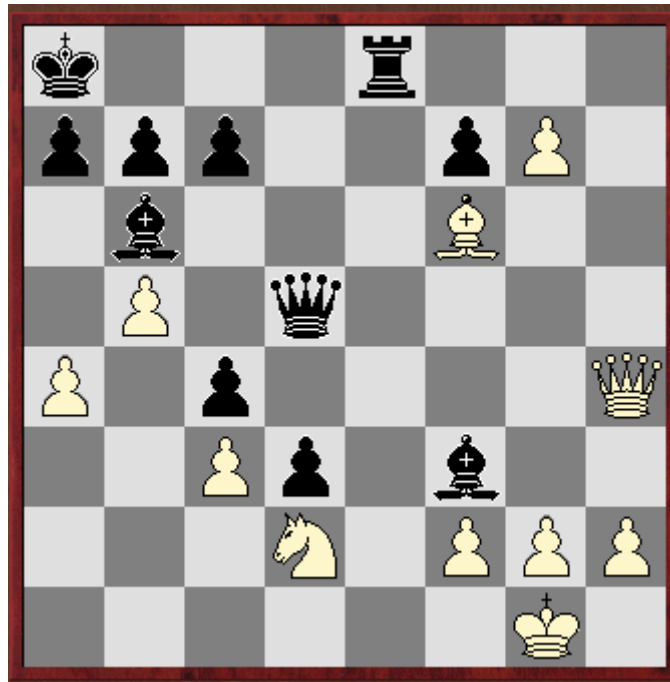


13... b5? 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.g5 b4? 16.Nxd5! Nxd5 17.Qe4+ – and white won back the piece with two extra pawns and a winning position. 13 year old Oda later completed the game in a very convincing way and after the first time control had reached a totally won rooks and minor piece endgame with three pawns more for white.

Eleven year old **Fredrik Valstad Elsness (1873)** obviously had the better preparation for his messy Italian position against **Indy Southcott-Moyers (2120)**: White after 16 moves had made all of his moves within a few seconds while black had spent more than 45 minutes. White's first decision of his own was a mistake, but black also made mistakes in this very complex position. White after 24 moves was an hour ahead on the clock and due to his passed pawn at g7 he appeared close to winning.



Southcott-Moyers vs Elsness



Now white should just have taken the black bishop with 25.gxf3, but he instead went for a knock out – and hit his own face:

25.Qh8? Qe6 26.Nxf3?? d2! and white a few minutes too late realized that 27.Nxd2 Qe1+ 28.Nf1 Qxf2+ would lead to a mate. White in desperation tried 27.h4, but black with an extra queen (!) following 27... d1Q+ of course had no problems winning the game.

Sondre Stai (1842) and **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)** today discussed a closed and rare Sicilian line, in which white after exchanging one knight and the dark squared bishops sacrificed a pawn for a promising initiative. The game suddenly was decided as white at move 29 tricked himself all around and blundered a piece.

The game between **Rounaiv Rana (2099)** and **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1813)** started up like a Classical Nimzo-Indian, but soon turned into a tactical mess. Following many violent exchanges the players after 20 moves slowed down in a balanced endgame with two rooks, one bishop and five pawns on each side. Black had 40 minutes against 10 on the clock and should have had very good chances to save this. White however still had the more active pieces. Black anyway lost contact with the position and the planet as he allowed white to play 26.Rd7 followed by 27.Rhxh7 and 28.Rdg7+ with a mating attack.



Rynning vs Rana

15 year old Armenian **Ani Avetisyan (1840)** as white against **Victor Havik (2078)** entered a Modern and complex Queen's Gambit variation in which black snatches a pawn at c4 and returns it at b5.

Both players spent much time from the opening but white definitely made the better evaluation when sacrificing her a-pawn to win the black pawn at e6. All the minor pieces after 25 moves were exchanged, but white had totally dominant heavy pieces and completed a direct attack against the black king after 32 moves.



Avetisyan vs Havik

The Scandinavian generation duel between eleven year old **Victor Lilliehöök (2060)** and 52 year old **FM Casper Dahl Rasmussen (2244)** started up with a Russian opening in which all the knights disappeared within the first 20 moves, leaving white slightly better on the board and clock.

Black made a sound decision to exchange first the bishops and then the queen, leaving after 30 moves a drawish double rook endgame with six pawns on each side. Lilliehöök again ran short of time and at move 40 trapped his rook at g4, hence black after 40 moves had a winning position. Black in turn however failed to find the best solution and so white towards the end of the fifth hour escaped into a dead drawn endgame with rook against rook and g-pawn.



Lilliehöök vs Rasmussen



Kumar vs Okuno

The junior duel between **Rion Okuno (1981)** and **CM Akshit Kumar J (2172)** saw another Russian opening line, in which white got a space advantage and kept a sound pressure after exchanging three sets of minor pieces. Opposite-coloured bishop in such positions often favours the attacking player, and exchanging the queens just before move 40 definitely improved black's chances. White however still had a space advantage plus the much better bishop, and in the sixth hour succeeded in winning a pawn and establish a passed pawn at d6. Black following this anyway

was in trouble when he stumbled into a direct kingside attack and lost his bishop.

CM Svetoslav Mihajlov (2094) and **Harry Zheng (2077)** discussed a very closed and slow Ruy Lopez opening, in which nothing was exchanged within the first 19 moves. All the pawns still were on the board after 30 moves, but the position gradually opened as three sets of minor pieces were exchanged. Black in the fourth and early fifth hour due to his bishop had a promising dark-square dominance, but struggled to make something concrete out of it as white had a fairly safe king on g1 and a sound pawn structure. Exchanging the queens at move 47 was too helpful from a black point of view, and a rather blocked rooks and minor piece endgame was agreed a draw within six more moves.

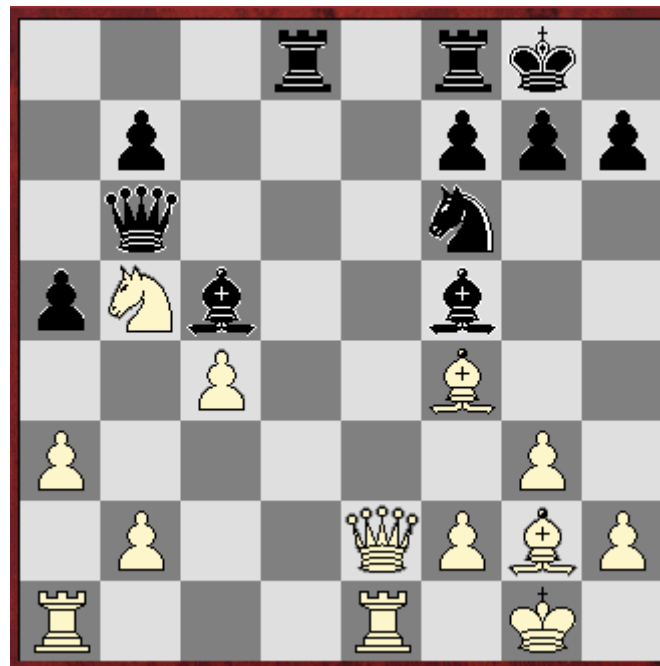


Mihajlov vs Zheng

Ask Amundsen (2069) went for a King's Indian Attack as white in the Norwegian junior duel against **Aidas Juodziukynas (1893)**. It worked out fairly well as black established a passed pawn at d4 but was too careless about protecting it. White by tactical means won the pawn after 16 moves, but black due to his active bishops got sufficient compensation. 19.Bf4? in turn was a careless blunder from white, as black could reply with a tactical 19... Bf5! and get a strong initiative. Instead of keeping up the pressure with his active pieces, black however made an instructive positional blunder:



Juodziukynas vs Amundsen



21... Bd3? allowed white to force tactical exchanges with 22.Bc7! Qxc7 23.Nxc7 Bxe2 24.Rxe2. White following this kept his extra pawn and soon picked up the weak black pawn at b7 with a won endgame.

Gokul Thangavel (1990) and **Lavinia Valcu (2070)** made an original start with 1.Nf3 b6 2.d4 Bb7 3.Bf4 e6 4.e3 f5, reaching some kind of Dutch hybrid. White first had some initiative, but after 20 moves black had more or less balanced the chances with queen, rook, bishop and seven pawns against queen, rook, knight and seven pawns. Exchanging the queens probably also was fine from a black point of view. White however kept an edge in the endgame with rook, knight and four pawns against rook, bishop and four pawns, much due to her more active king. Black in the fourth hour here became too passive, and her position collapsed with the key pawn at c5 just before the first time control.

The game between **FM Vegar Koi Gandrud (2293)** and **WCM Sachi Jain (1992)** saw an Open Catalan Opening which black first handled very well, reaching balanced chances following an early queen exchange. A stream of sound exchanges followed, leaving after 25 moves a very drawish rook endgame with five pawns on each side.

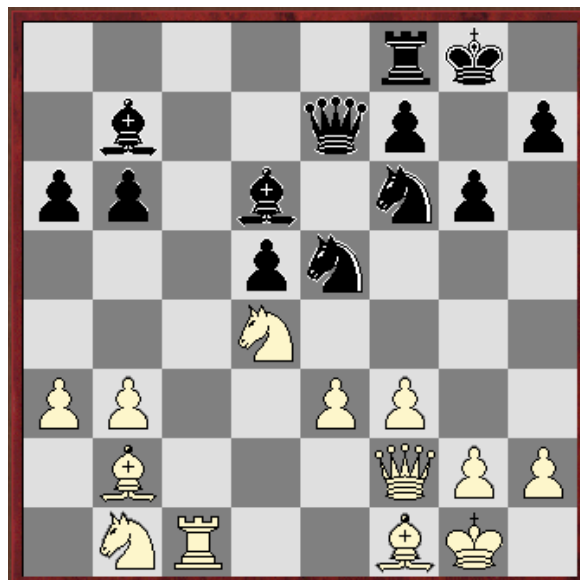


Jain vs Gandrud

Gandrud as the higher rated player with the white pieces played on and was rewarded, as black in the fourth hour became much too passive. White following this got the help needed to march his king up and win black's key

pawn at a7. Black finally came up with some counterplay in the fifth hour, but it was too little and too late: The remaining passed pawns race had a given outcome as white could safely sacrifice his rook on black's last pawn, to let his three passed pawns march in.

Finally, on board 49, **Håvard Eriksen Bech (1951)** and **CM Joel Paul Ganta (1993)** started up with 1.c4 c6 but soon transposed into a positional Anti-Meran line of a Semi-Slav opening. Chances after 20 moves still were about balanced, but Ganta efficiently used the chance for a tactical stroke soon afterwards:



22.a4? was much too careless as black following 22... Neg4! 23.fxg4 Bxh2+ 24.Kh1 Ne4 25.Qf3 Qh4 won decisive material.

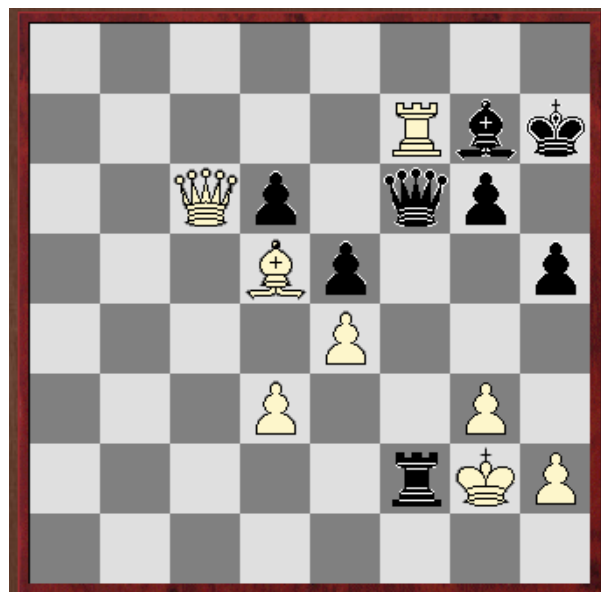
Morten Andersen (2178) had requested a walk over draw before round 4, and consequently **Sebastian Lien (1885)** as the lowest rated player at 0/3 got a walk over draw from the pairings. Both players will be back for round 5.

Open Group



Strand vs Spanton (Photo: Anniken Vestby)

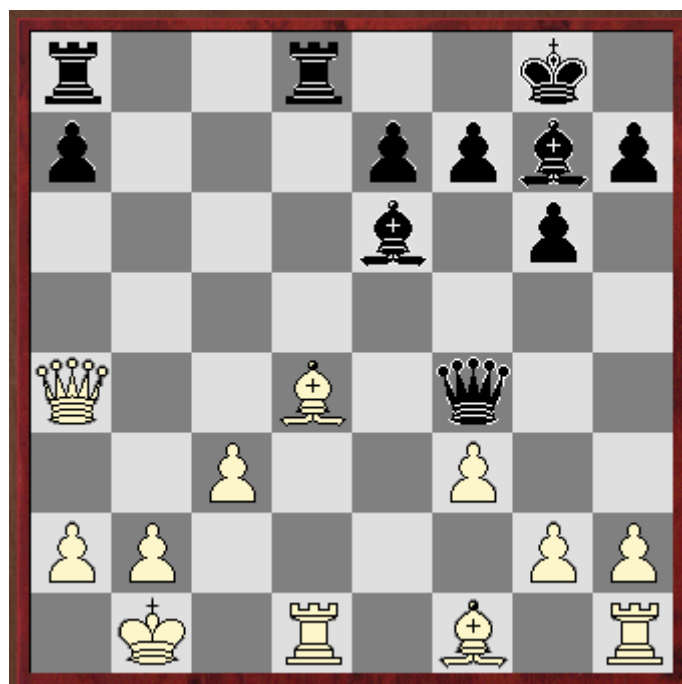
The Open got a winner in all the top three games, but also has only one player left at a perfect score with 4,0/4. The first board duel between seventh rated **Amund Pihl Strand (1860)** and sixth rated **Tim Spanton (1876)** suddenly became an attacking battle around move 28, when white had five minutes and black well above one hour left on the clock. The game was decided as black played too fast a few moves later on.



With only one minute on the clock, white left a repetition of checks with 34.Kh3! Now 34... Qxf7 35.Bxf7 Rxf7 would have given black excellent chances for a draw. Instead black with one hour left on the clock played 34... g5?? and soon went bankrupt after 35.Rxf6 g4+ 36,Kh4 Bxf6+ 37.Kxh5 Rxh2 38.Kxg4.

Veteran **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1789)** meanwhile had his first loss without much of a chance on the second board: Top rated **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1963)** got a strong attack almost from the opening in this Caro-Kann game, and before move 20 came two pawns up with an overwhelming position.

Third board also was rather one way driven this round: Our 42 year old new Indian Chessfriend **Reddy Sushrutha (1707)** has been playing very well so far and due to his powerful bishops reached a winning attack before 15 moves as black against **Alina Shehzad (1670)**. Black efficiently won decisive material within four more moves:



18... Bf5+ 19.Ka1 e5! and the pinned bishop soon went lost. Curiously the game lasted 24 moves, and Sushrutha had more time on the clock after the last move than he had before the first move!

Fifth rated **Morten Rolstad (1879)** on the fourth board had a promising initiative as white against fourth rated **Dag Arild Andersen (1899)**, but Andersen today defended well and the game finished in a drawn rook and minor piece endgame after 35 moves.

Third rated **Sigurd Kittilsen (1910)** on the fifth board for three hours had a tough opponent in eleven year old **Sophie Damiano (1691)**, but the game suddenly turned in favour of white as black lost concentration and blundered a piece at move 24.

Veteran Karim Ali (1855) had a patient endgame win as black against the rising talent **Daniel Vollheim (1713)** on board six, while **Benjamin Halvorsen (1848)** succeeded in winning a drawish rook endgame against **Christine Nordahl (1673)** on the seventh board.

The lower boards had many entertaining games but no really surprising game results today. Fighting spirit in this morning round was remarkable, as only three out of 23 games ended with a draw.

20 year old Amund Pihl Strand of Kristiansund following all this is leading the Open alone at 4,0/4, half a point ahead of Andreas Skrede Hausken of Ålesund and Reddy Susrutha of India – with eight more players shadowing at 3,0/4. Pihl Strand next round will get the black pieces against Sushrutha, while Hausken will get a tough test as black against third rated Kittilsen.



From round 4 (Photo: Anniken Vestby)

Photos by Tom Eriksen and Anniken Vestby