

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2024

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

5



GM Group

The second part of the double round not unexpectedly saw some kind of chain reaction on the top boards. Fourth board between Turkish IM Isik Can and Indian GM Abhimanyu Puranik was drawn before 10 moves. Second board duel between GM Rinat Jumabayev and IM Mohapatra Sidhant was drawn in an approximately balanced position after 22 moves, and so was the third board Norwegian duel between IM Jens Evang Ingebretsen and GM Frode Urkedal. Fourth-rated GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly as white on the first board made a serious try to defeat solid Israeli GM Igo Gorshtein, and reached an endgame with an extra pawn – but still proved unable to win.

Third-rated GM Krishnan Sasikiran soon came better and was expected to win on the fifth board as black against IM Ameet Ghasi, but the Englishman fought on well and a tired Sasikiran late in the evening offered a draw in a still promising position. Eight board duel between GM Pranav Anand and IM Linus Johansson continued for almost six hours, but the young Indian at that stage had no winning chances despite an extra pawn in the rook endgame. Seventh board between IM Jonah Willow and GM Raja Rithvik R was a rather short draw, and so the only winner on the top eight boards tonight was Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots – winning a patient white game against the young Norwegian sensation man FM Saad Elmi. GM Erik Blomqvist also strengthened his position notably by winning an endgame with a pawn less as black against IM Sambit Panda on the ninth board.

The lower boards had more decided games but relatively few surprising results. FM Nicolai Kistrup winning as black against IM Nico Chasin qualify as a surprise, and so did Peder Aaamodt winning as black against FM Håvard Haug. Haug following this is already out of the run for another IM norm, a few weeks after his norm in Kragerø. It is obviously too early to talk in details about title norms after five rounds, but we can safely conclude that many participants here are still in the run. 15 year old Armenian Ani Avetisyan has done very well following a slow start, and today scored a five-hour draw as black against IM Helge A Nordahl.

Round 5 following this did not change that much about the top top positions in the tournament: Ganguly is leading alone at an outstanding 4,5/5, half a point ahead of Jumabayev, Gorshtein, Urkedal, Kulaots Blomqvist, Ingebretsen and Sidhant. Ganguly will get a critical test as black against Jumabayev on the top board in round 6, while other top board pairings will be Blomqvist white against Gorshtein, Urkedal white against Sidhant and Ingebretsen white against Kulaots.

Tonight's first board meeting between Indian **GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly (2574)** and Israeli **GM Ido Gorshtein (2539)** started up with 1.c4 c6, but transposed into a positional Anti-Meran line of the Semi-Slav opening. Black first apparently had a healthy position, but white around move 20 got a promising pressure against black's isolated pawn at d5. White went on to win the pawn and around move 40 held an advantage, although black's active pieces gave him some compensation. Solid Gorshtein was under some pressure today, but in the end he and his active king still saved the draw fairly confidently in the double minor piece endgame.



Ganguly vs Gorshtein

GM Rinat Jumabayev (2598) as white against **IM Mohapatra Sidhant (2379)** entered a Slav line in which white and his pair of bishops kept a slight initiative. Both players here castled long, and around move 20 it was not easy for anyone to make progress without running big risks. The sudden draw agreement after 22 moves came a bit unexpected, although Sidhant had 14 minutes against 14 on the clock and a solid position on the board.

The Norwegian third board duel between **IM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2402)** and **GM Frode Urkedal (2536)** started up like an English opening, in which white kept a light pressure following an early queen exchange. The position with two rooks, bishop and six pawns against two rooks, knight and six pawns after 20 moves apparently was somewhat better for white due to his pressure against black's pawn at e6, although white also had an isolated pawn at d4. Ingebretsen following a long win in the first half of the double round understandably took a safe approach in the second half, as he at move 22 exchanged his bishop for the black knight at b8 and offered a draw.



Ingebretsen vs Urkedal

IM Isik Can (2493) and **GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2618)** entered a Three Knights opening, but then upon white's suggestion agreed a draw after 6 moves.

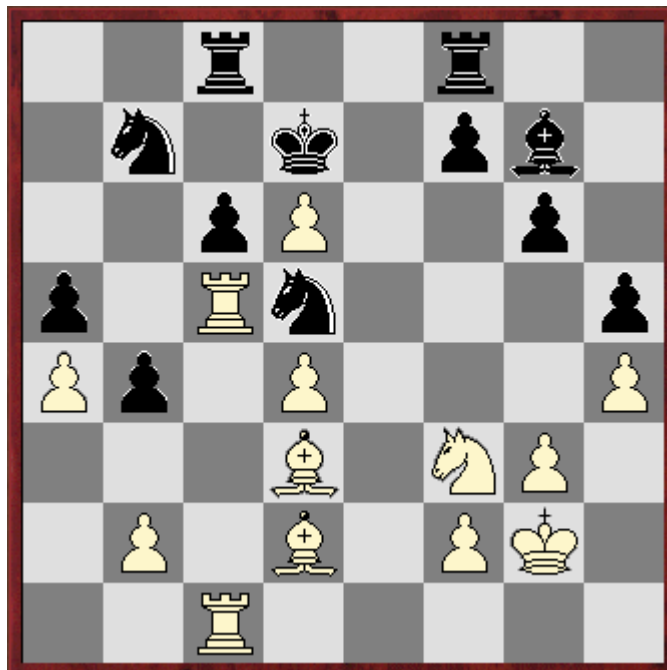


Ghasi vs Sasikiran

IM Ameet Ghasi (2485) versus **GM Krishan Sasikiran (2578)** on the other hand was a hard-fought five-hour draw in which the outcome was in doubt until the very last move. Ghasi's King's Indian Advance this round was a failure, as black soon took over the initiative and after 24 moves had established a threatening passed pawn at d3. Black following a tactical queen exchange came a pawn up with a winning advantage according to the computers. Sasikiran however somehow lost concentration after the first time control and did not play the natural

43.--- gxf5, instead allowing a lot of counterplay with 44.fxg6 and 45.gxf7+. Black still was better when Sasikiran suddenly offered a draw at move 46

The Ruy Lopez has been in fashion at this tournament so far, and was tested again between Estonian **GM Kaido Kulaots (2534)** and Norwegian junior **FM Saad Elmi (2344)**. White here did not appear to have a long preparation as he spent much time from the opening. Following an early queen exchange, white still kept an advantage due to his pair of bishops. White after 30 moves was down to two minutes (against almost half an hour for black) on the clock, but had doubled his rook with promising pressure on the board. Sacrificing an exchange here was dubious, but gave a jackpot as black failed to find the best continuation:



31.Rxd5? cxd5 32.Bb5+ and now the cunning 32.--- Kd8! would have been rather unclear, while the greedy 32.--- Kxd6?? won decisive material for white after 33.Bf4+ Ke7 34.Re1+ Kd8 35.Ba6.

IM Jonah B. Willow (2446) versus **GM Raja Rithvik R (2532)** was drawn after 15 moves theory from a rather positional Sicilian Najdorf variation. Willow was white, but understandably tired following his marathon draw from the first half of the double round.

GM Pranav Anand (2519) and **IM Linus Johansson (2427)** on the other hand had a tense six-hour battle. The start was a Sicilian Rossolimo in which white exchanged his light-squared bishop for a knight at c6, after which black exchanged his light-squared bishop for a knight at f3. White soon exchanged his dark-squared bishop for the remaining black knight and established a lasting positional grip due to his rooks in the b-file and the strong knight square on c4. Giving up a pawn to exchange the queens plus the last minor piece probably was a mistaken plan from black, as white after 32 moves was close to winning in the rook endgame with five pawns against four pawns. White however handled this endgame inaccurately, allowing black to trade his passed a-pawn for two of the white kingside pawns. White still was slightly better and in the sixth hour again won a pawn, but black had the draw under fair control due to the reduced material.

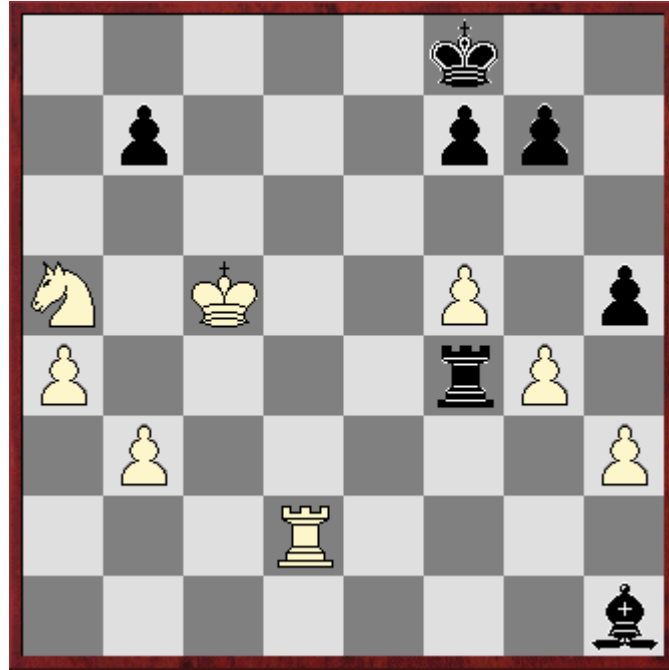


Anand vs Johansson

The game between **IM Sambit Panda (2377)** and **GM Erik Blomqvist (2511)** first saw another Queen's Gambit Ragozin duel. Black in this one accepted an isolated pawn at d5, and white after exchanging two sets of minor pieces could install his knight on the key d4 square with a slight advantage. White accepted a double f-pawn when offering a queen exchange, and following this chances after 30 moves were fairly balanced with rook, bishop, knight and six pawns on each side. White in the fourth hour got some pressure against black's isolated pawn at d5 and succeeded in winning this at move 39. The position after move 45 following this was considered a borderline between a draw and a win for white. So far so good Panda however then lost his concentration totally for one very important moment:

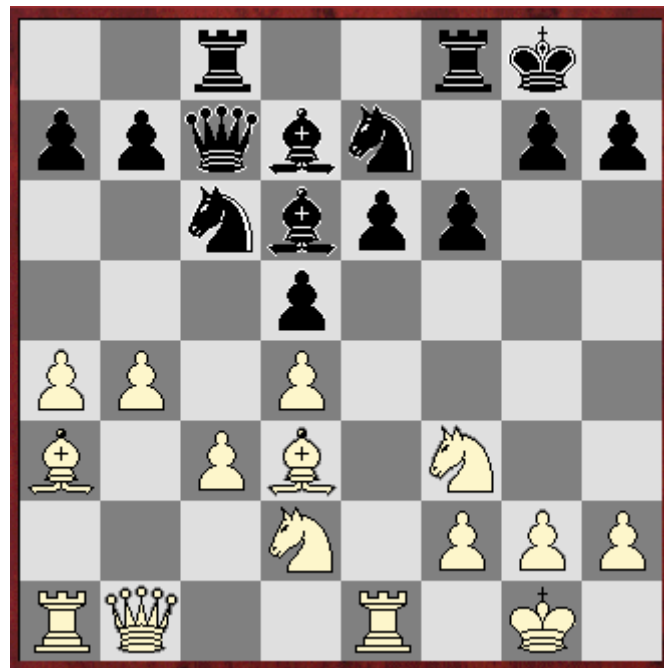


Blomqvist



46.Rd4?? b6+! 47.Kc4 Rxd4+ 48.Kxd4 bxa5 – and the GM with an extra bishop had no problems winning the endgame.

The highly talented Teenagers **FM Yuval Yaniv (2368)** and **IM Elham Amar (2567)** today discussed a Caro-Kann exchange line in which black creatively and dubiously sacrificed his pawn at h7 immediately after the opening – with the idea of sacrificing the g-pawn at g5 too:



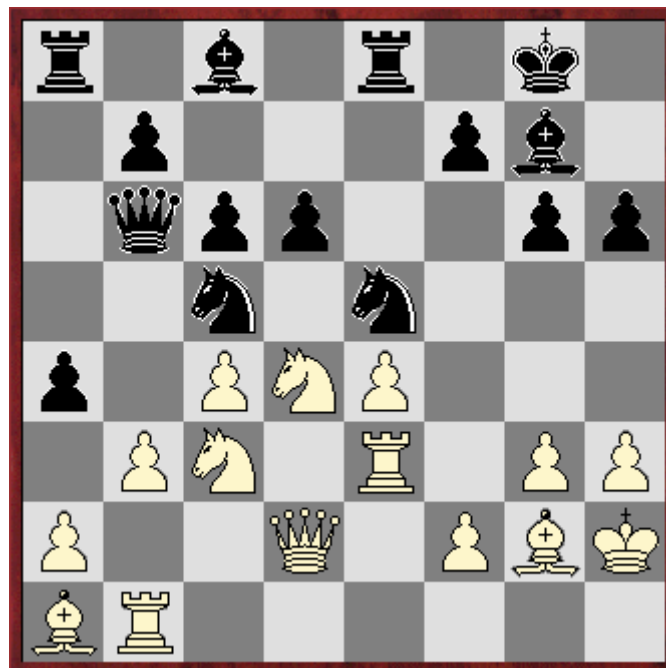
13... g5?! 14.Bxh7+Kg7 15.h3 f5 16.Nxg5 Nd8. Computers consider the position clearly better for white, but it is definitely not easy to play for him. Black some complications later won the bishop at h7 for three pawns, and anyway was better when Yaniv ran short of time and blundered.

FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2351) and **IM Semen Mitusov (2487)** started up with an Open Catalan in which black could hang on his extra pawn at c4. White had just about enough compensation due to his pair of bishops and eventually won back the pawn. After 30 moves the players following this had reached a drawish queen endgame with six pawns on each side. White was well ahead on the clock and showed no signs of weakness or doubts within the next 15 moves, hence black after 45 moves accepted a draw by repetition. Nielsen following this solid draw is in the run for an IM norm with four games left.



Mitusov

IM Moksh Doshi (2353) versus **IM Yahli Sokolovsky (2475)** saw a positional King's Indian Fianchetto duel which white was not too well prepared for, as black soon came ahead on the clock and on the board. 18.Ba1?! was a mistake allowing a tactical hit:



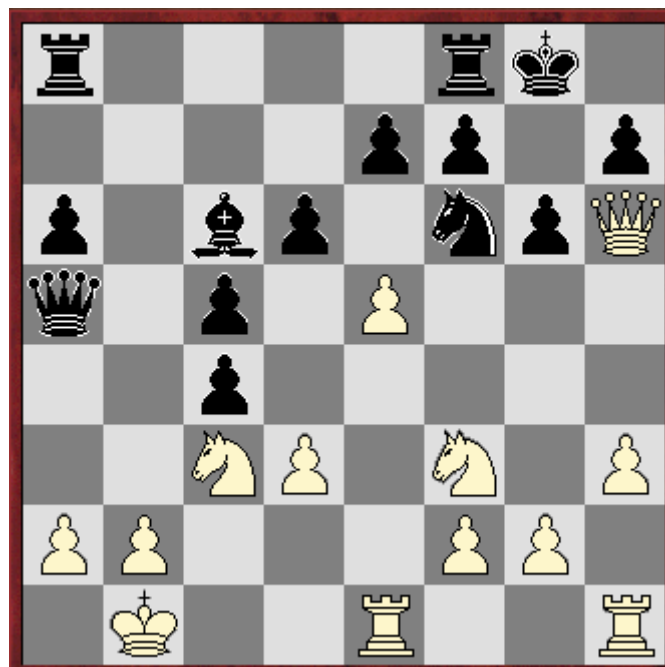
18.--- axb3 19.axb3 Rxa1 20.Rxa1 Nxb3 21.Nxb3 Nxc4 22.Qc2 Nxe3 23.fxe3 Qxe3 24.Rc1 Be5 25.Ne2 h5 with a strong initiative for black. White avoided dangers of a direct mate as he succeeded in exchanging queens a few moves later on, but black's passed queenside pawns combined with his more active pieces soon decided in the endgame.

53 year old **GM Tiger Hillarp (2473)** as white against 17 year old **FM Ritvik Krishnan (2277)** again went for a positional duel with a King's Indian Advanced. Krishnan here made a good decision to allow 14.Bxa5 bxa5, as black's pair of bishops and dark-square dominance compensated fully for his inferior pawn structure with two isolated a-pawns. Chances remained about balanced through a steam of fairly sound exchanges and a dead rook endgame with four kingside pawns on each side was agreed a draw immediately after the time control. Krishnan following this midway is well in the run for an IM-norm.



Krishnan vs Hillarp

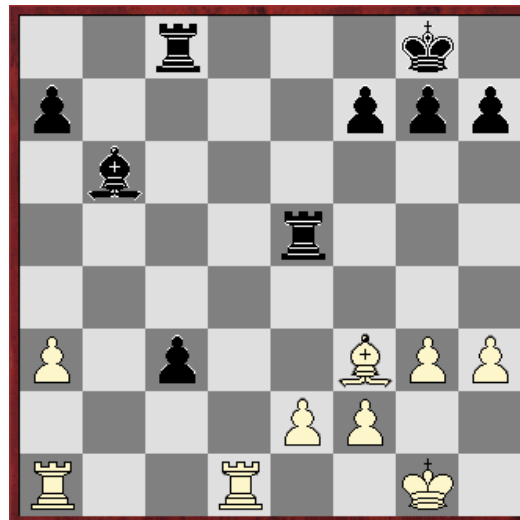
IM Erik Hedman (2311) as white in a Sicilian against **IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2454)** made an apparently slow and safe start with 3.Bb5+ and another Moscow line. This however soon became a very double-edged position as white castled long to go for a direct kingside attack. Both players blitzed out the first 13 moves, but then spent much time for the next few moves. Black made the better use of the time as 17.e5?! although thematic here was a dubious pawn sacrifice. Kvaløy in an inspired mood soon hit back on the queenside:



17.-- dxe5 18.Nxe5 Bxg2 19.Rhg1 Rab8! 20.Ka1 Rxb2! 21.Nxc4 Qxc3 22.Nxb2 Bd5 and black kept a strong initiative with a strong bishop and two pawns for the rook. Black never invited white back into the game and won in 33 moves.

FM Gunnar Lund (2335) versus **IM Tobias Kölle (2460)** was a closed Catalan in which white could play 18.d5 and 20.dxe6 with some pressure against black's isolated pawn at e6. Black however had enough pieces to protect the pawn and white with queen, rook, knight and six pawns on each side, and this became a rather obvious draw as white at move 31 helpfully offered a knight exchange.

The «Nico duel» between American **IM Nico Chasin (2447)** and Dane **FM Nicolai Kistrup (2324)** started up with a fairly balanced English opening. 14.c5?! was a loose pawn sacrifice from white, but within a few moves he won back the pawn to reach a nearly balanced endgame with two rooks, one bishop and five pawns on each side. Black's passed c-pawn gave him an initiative, but opposite-coloured bishops voted for a draw. The FM instructively used his chance as the IM became much too careless:



28.Rd7?? c2! 29.Rc1 Rb5 30.Kg2 Rb1 31.Rdd1 cxd1Q+! and white resigned. It is somehow inspiring for players in the Open to see that players above 2400 also can make this kind of blunders. 21 year old Nicolai Kistrup following this win is well in the run for an IM-norm.

IM Edvin Trost (2432) and **CM John Stark (1947)** discussed an old and still interesting Capablanca line in a Queen's Indian opening. Trost again came well ahead on the clock and it soon turned out that he also had the better knowledge of this variation:



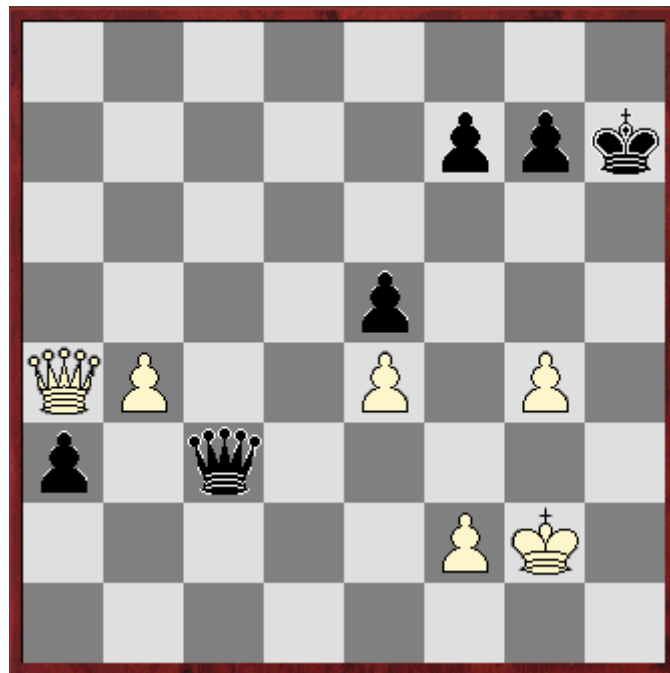
13.--- Bd6?! 14.Ndc4! with a clear advantage – and then 14.--- Ne4? 15.Bxe4 dxe4 16.Nxd6 cxd6 17.Nc4 Qd8 18.d5! with a strategically won position for white. Trost could soon pick up the weak black pawn at d6 and won the game after 28 moves.



Elsness

The game between Israeli **FM Roy Vagman (2311)** and Norwegian **IM Frode Elsness (2437)** was (even) another Ruy Lopez opening. All the knights and nothing else was exchanged within the first 20 moves, leaving a rather closed position in which black had taken over the initiative. White offered a draw by placing a bishop at f6 in move 17, but withdrew the bishop four moves later as black was obviously not going to allow a perpetual check by taking it. Elsness instead opened the c- and d-file with a promising initiative, but later found nothing better than exchanges – leading

after 48 moves to a drawish queen endgame with five pawns on each side. Black played for a win with 50.--- a4!?, and got a jackpot as white replied with 51.b4? instead of 51.bxa4. Black in turn chose an inaccurate queen square afterwards, but due to his passed pawn at a3 apparently still was close to winning after 54 moves. Vagman now however was alert and had the draw under fair control:



55.b5 Qb2 56.Qa7! a2 57.Qxf7 a1Q 58.Qh5+ with a well known perpetual check machine. Vagman following one more long draw stays in the run for an IM norm.

WGM Pallathur Nandhidhaa (2305) and **IM Hampus Sørensen (2428)** started up with great speed in an Italian opening which offers about equal chances, as black got two bishops and an inferior pawn structure. Black later exchanged one of the bishops but then had enough counterplay due to his heavy pieces in the f-file. None of the players here noted that white made an instructive blunder:



26.--- d4 was more cunning than black himself was aware of, as 27.Rc4?? was a losing move because of 27.--- g6! Here 28.Qc5 or 28.Qa5 are out of question due to 28.--- Rxf3! with a decisive attack against the white king, while 28.Qe5 Rxf3 29.Qxf6 R3xf6 is losing a piece. Black instead went for 27.--- Rf5? 28.Qg4 Rd5 and the game was eventually drawn in a balanced rook and minor piece endgame some 20 moves later on.

Sergey Eliseev (2131) and **IM Stavroula Tsolakidou (2424)** meanwhile discussed a closed and rare old Sicilian line, in which black came better as white's knight maneuvers on the kingside resulted only in exchanges. After move 30 the position with queen, two rooks, one bishop and six pawns on each side was closed and rather drawish. 36.f4?! however was helpful to open the position on terms favourable to the black pieces. The endgame with rook, bishop and two pawns on each side after the first time control probably should have been a draw, but the passed pawn at b4 gave black the much more easy position to play. Tsolakidou user her chances very well, and early in the sixth hour her king could made a decisive intervention. White lost his bishop and resigned after 61 moves.



Southcott-Moyers vs Petkov

Indy Southcott-Moyers (2120) and **GM Momchil Petkov (2500)** both spent much time from a rare version of a Queen's Gambit Exchange line.

The young 2100-player won the opening duel convincingly: Following an early queen exchange, white after 20 moves was clearly better as he had both the pair of bishops and the better pawn structure. The GM however woke up just in time while the 2100-player became more or less paralyzed. Black following helpful exchanges after 26 moves had reached a balanced position with rook, bishop, knight and four pawns against

rook, two bishops and four pawns. White then went for a dubious pawn exchange which left black with a dangerous passed pawn at d3. Southcott-Moyers for a while fought on well after the time control, but it was an uphill struggle and black's passed pawn finally won a piece after 54 moves.

IM Hasan Huseyin Celik (2417) versus **CM Andreas Skotheim (2214)** was a new test of a very old Ruy Lopez exchange variation with a dubious reputation. The reputation was not improved by this game, as white following an early queen got a strong initiative and after 18 moves was a pawn up with the much better structure. Celik efficiently kept up the pressure and won a piece before 25 moves.

FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2277) as white in a French against **GM Stellan Brynell (2406)** went for an apparently safe and symmetrical exchange line. This gave black no problems whatsoever with his development, and black kept a slight initiative after exchanging all the bishops. As the queens and rooks also left before move 30, the game was considered a very likely draw.

The GM however played on with two knights and seven pawns on each side – and got something to play for as white strangely advanced his a-pawn to a risky position at a5. Brynell however did not find the critical plan to attack the a-pawn, and the game after all was agreed drawn in a rather blocked endgame after 48 moves.



Brynell

Estonian **IM Mai Narva (2399)** and Indian teenager **Rounaiv Rana (2099)** discussed a Sicilian Two Knights Opening in which black made some dubious decisions, leaving white with two bishops against two knights plus the better pawn structure. Narva (of course) soon went for a direct kingside attack, accepting to exchange one of the bishops. Giving up the attack to win a pawn at a6 might have been a mistake, but white still came a pawn up in the rook endgame and her passed b-pawn soon decided.



Narva vs Rana

IM Ameya Audi (2378) soon got a promising pressure as white in a Sicilian Rossolimo against **Oda Kofoed Skramstad (1945)**, and black anyway was under pressure when she at move 18 blundered a piece.

Norwegian **Eivind Grunt Kreken (2215)** versus Costa Rican **IM Sebastian Mihajlov (2373)** was a King's Indian Advanced game which made a dramatic start: Black kept his king at e8 and his bishop at f8 too long, and ran into serious trouble as white opened the center with e4 followed by a tactical Nd5. Black ended up with an awkward king at f8 and white due to his passed pawn at e6 plus the more active pieces had a winning advantage around move 30. White however failed to find any breakthrough, and helpfully solved almost all black's problems as he short of time accepted exchanging the queens at move 38. The white pawn at e6 now was a weakness and soon went lost. Black following this in the fifth hour came a pawn up in the minor piece endgame, although white in the sixth hour scraped a draw due to the reduced number of pawns combined with his active king. Kreken really could have had a good run for his first IM norm if winning a won position tonight. Five draws against higher rated opponents obviously still is a very good result for the Norwegian junior champion.



Mihajlov vs Kreken

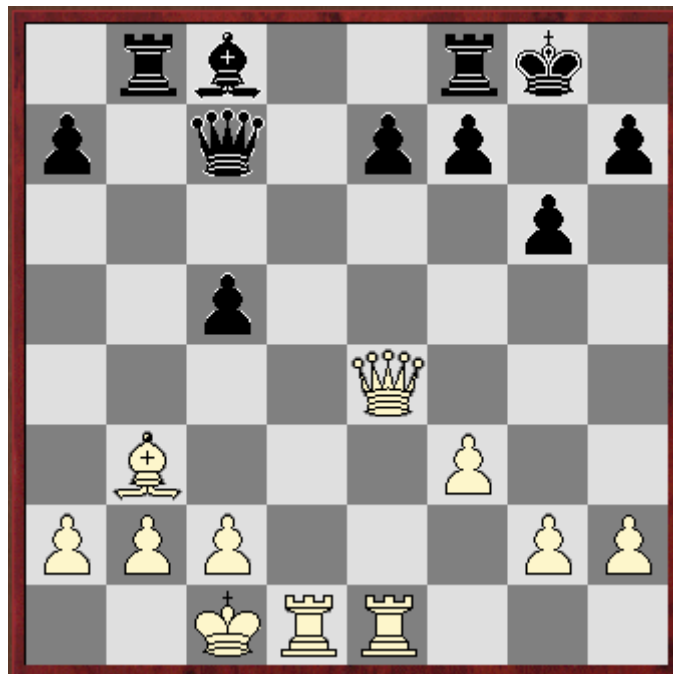


Chatterjee vs Kenneskog

Indian **Aniruddh Chatterjee (2182)** as white against Swede **FM Theodor Kenneskog (2358)** started up with a patient English opening, reaching a symmetrical position with an isolated white pawn at d4 and an isolated black pawn at d5. Black after exchanging the queens and two sets of minor pieces got a pleasant initiative, increasing as white weakened his kingside with 16.g4 and 20.g5. White gave up a pawn to exchange the center pawns plus some more pieces, and after 38 moves had some compensation with bishop, knight and three pawns against bishop, knight and four pawns.

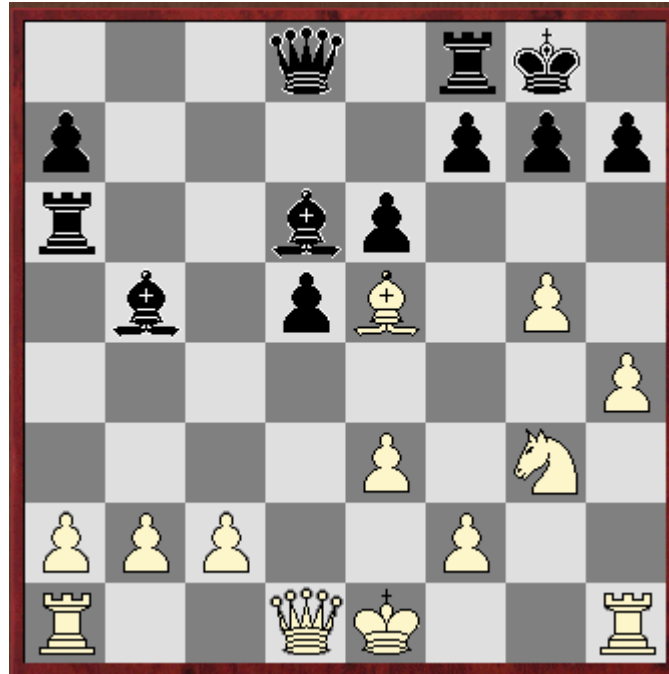
Probably white should have been able to save this, but the higher rated player was a pawn up and in the fifth hour proved able to activate his king and kingside pawn majority with decisive effect.

IM Ludvig Carlsson (2350) and **WCM Anishka Vikram (1995)** both made some 20 moves in a positional Sicilian Dragon line within the first 15 minutes of this round. Three sets of minor pieces were exchanged, leaving white with a slight advantage due to his better pawn structure. Vikram's first decision of her own in this game turned out to be a dubious pawn sacrifice:



19.--- Qb6? 20.Qxe7 c4?! 21.Rd6 Qf2 22.Rd2 Qb6 23.Rd6 Qf2 24.Bxc4 with two extra pawns and a won position for white. Carlsson played inaccurately following an exchange sacrifice a few moves later on, but still had four pawns for the exchange and won the game well before 40 moves.

The Norwegian teenagers **FM Håvard Haug (2341)** and **Peder Marcus Aamodt (1941)** meanwhile discussed the modern Rapport-Jobava-system, first leading to a pawn more with some advantage for white. Black's pair of bishops however gave him some practical compensation and Haug's plan with 17.Ne2? followed by 18.Ng3? and 19.Qd4? turned out to be a serious misunderstanding:



19.Bxd6 still is acceptable for white, while 19.Qd4?? lost decisive material after 19.--- Ra4! 20.Qc3 Bb4. Haug disappointingly is out of the run for an IM-norm midway, while Aamodt is doing very well following some months of disappointing results.

Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118) and **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2336)** meanwhile discussed a Queen's Gambit Accepted. Black first came better, as he after giving back the pawn was allowed to exchange white's key pawn at e4 and disrupt white's kingside pawn structure with 16.--- Bxf3 17.gxf3. White however balanced the chances by tactical means, winning a pawn following a tactical pseudo-sacrifice with 22.Nxe6. Black had active pieces and won back the pawn, leaving after 36 moves a balanced but far from dead position with queen, rook, bishop and four pawns against queen, rook, knight and four pawns. With one minute left on the clock, Fiskaaen blundered his key pawn at b2. Black later was a pawn up with a decisive advantage due to his passed b-pawn combined with the airy white king.

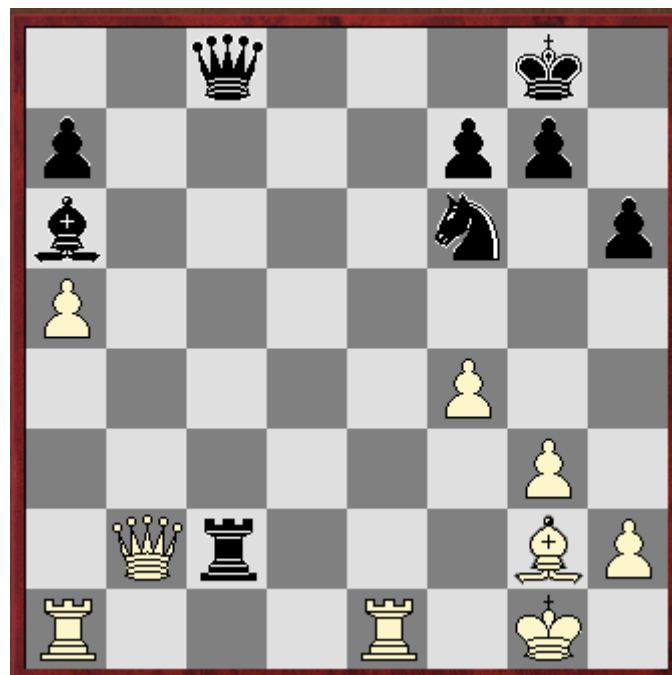


Fiskaaen

Per Fredrik Holand (2068) and **IM Dushyant Sharma (2331)** discussed an open Catalan in which black returned the pawn at c4 and later did fine much due to his active bishop at a6. Locking in the bishop with 18... c4? was a strategical mistake and white following this came better for a few moves. Black creatively sacrificed an exchange and got an initiative, but the position remained in dynamic balance and black after 30 moves was seriously short of time. Fairly typically white became too eager and blundered with 39 minutes against 3 on the clock:



Holand vs Sharma



32.Qd4? allowed Rxc2+ 33.Kxg2 Qc6+ 34.Kg1 Bb7 35.Qd8+ Kh7 36.Qd3+ g6 37.Kf2 Ng4+ 38.Ke2 Ba6 0-1. True enough a great combination which it is very understandable to overlook from the wrong side of the board.

48 year old Norwegian **IM Helge A Nordahl (2330)** and 15 year old Armenian **Ani Avetisyan (1840)** today discussed a positional Queen's Gambit, leading to a hanging pawns position in which white was slightly better. White found nothing better than exchanging both the queens and the black pawn at d5, leaving a rooks and knight endgame in which white's pressure against the isolated pawn at c5 gave him no real winning chances. Avetisyan has improved a lot following her troublesome start and in the fifth hour forced a draw by a counterattack against the white pawn at b3.

The teenager duel between **WFM Shivika Rohilla (2003)** and **FM Shazil Shehzad (2301)** started up with an English fianchetto, which black unbalanced by exchanging his dark-squared bishop for a knight at a3. The position soon turned in favour of black as white allowed a tactical hit at d3, leaving black with one rook and three pawns for two minor pieces. Black due to his center and active pieces later kept a strong initiative and won decisive material well before 40 moves.



Shehzad vs Rohilla

GM Prraneeth Vuppala (2506) versus **Rishi Vijayakumar (2156)** was some kind of half-closed Catalan, in which black spent a lot of time exchanging his knight for a bishop with Nc6-Na5-Nb3-Nxc1. The GM made the better evaluation here, as his center advantage and active knights soon proved more important than black's rather passive pair of bishops. White instructively sacrificed a pawn at e5 to open the position and jumped in with the pieces, and after 33 moves was a sound rook up.

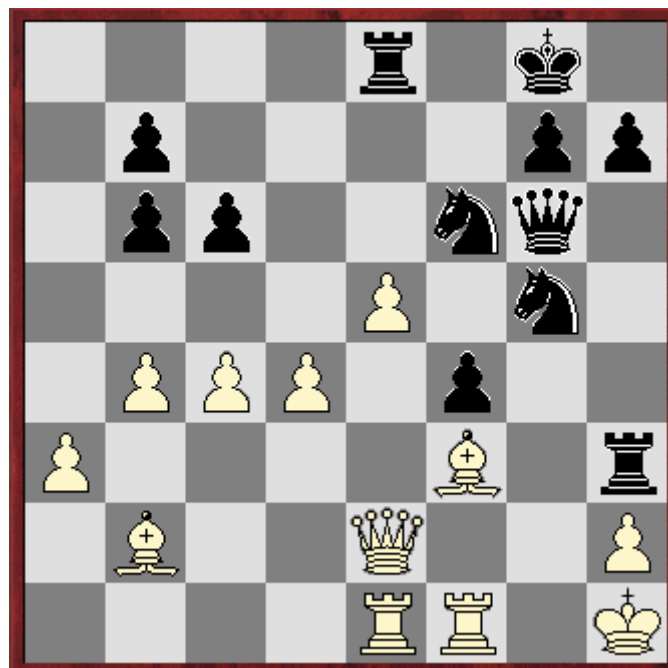


Vuppala vs Vijayakumar (front) and Melaa vs Sian (back)

Sondre Melaa (2285) and **Shadi Sian (2076)** made a firework start with a dynamic Sicilian Najdorf duel. The outcome however became a lot of tactical exchange and other exchanges. When the smoke left after 20 moves the players had reached an approximately balanced endgame with two rooks, bishop and four pawns against two rooks, knight and four pawns. The game was agreed a draw by repetition within five more moves.

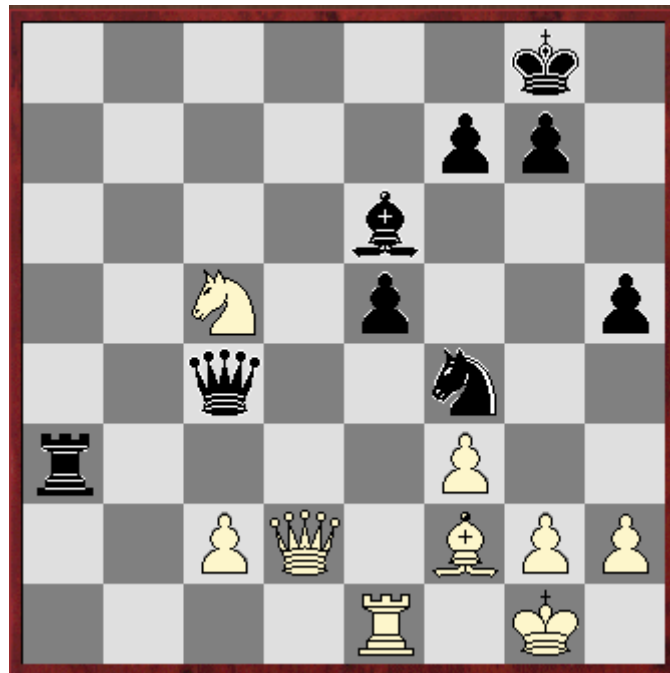
FM Daakshin Arun (2283) as white in a Queen's Gambit Accepted against **Ask Amundsen (2069)** went for 3.e3, predictably leading to a position with an isolated queen's pawn for white. Black exchanged the queens at b4, leaving a position in which white had some space advantage due to his well-protected pawn at d5. White's advantage also increased with the pair of bishops, as he could play Nb5 followed by Nxd6 before move 15. Black's decision to snatch a pawn at b2 with his knight later was playable but risky, and backfired as he soon made a mistake and had to give up the knight for two pawns. White later had it all under control, and made a good practical decision as he sacrificed back an exchange to let his passed d-pawn decide.

FM James Moreby (2260) remains true to his patriotic English defence, and today got a pleasant advantage as he after 15 moves had two bishops versus two knights against **Gokul Thangavel (1990)**. White's try to open the kingside however worked out better for the black pieces and black following this after 30 moves had enough counterplay to balance the chances.



31.Qg2? was a blunder as black after 31... Nh5! 32.Bxh5 Qxh5 33.Rxf4 Nf3 forced white to sacrifice an exchange. White's passed e- and d-pawn were unable to create enough counterplay. They were however able to convince black that white had some counterplay, hence the game was drawn by a repetition after 40 moves – when black still was objectively winning on the board.

The game between **FM Fredrik Lindh (2256)** and **Rion Okuno (1981)** for almost three hours was a tense and roughly balanced Sicilian Najdorf. Then black made a blunder which white efficiently called:



25.--- Rc3?? 26.Re4! Rxc2 27.Qd8+ Kh7 28.Rxc4 and soon 1-0.

Morten Andersen (2178) and **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1985)** had an interesting discussion about a dynamic Benoni finchetto position. Sacrificing an exchange at e3 here was a bit too dynamic from a black point of view, but still gave black strong pressure since white chose the wrong plan afterwards. During mutual time pressure the tide again turned as black much too cheaply gave up his important pawn at d6. White despite some mistakes later made the better calculations and soon after the first time control had a decisive material advantage.



Gåsland vs Andersen

The Norwegian duel between **Martin Øksendal (2086)** and **FM Vegar Koi Gandrud (2293)** was another messy Sicilian Najdorf duel. In this one both players castled long. This left black's king in a more airy position than white's, and white after exchanging all the knights came a pawn up with a strong initiative. Exchanging the queens here obviously was a popular decision for the black king. White kept an extra pawn, but the remaining bishop endgame after 30 moves was a rather safe draw for black.



Øksendal vs Gandrud

The Norwegian teenager duel between **Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (2035)** and **Isak Vinh Brattgjerd (2228)** was a Caro-Kann Tartakower line, in which white got the slightly better pawn structure following an early exchange at f6. Black had no other worries and took over the initiative after exchanging three sets of minor pieces. As the light-squared bishops also were exchanged, the remaining position with queen, two rooks and seven pawns on each side after 30 moves appeared drawish. Black's double f-pawn in this situation actually was a big advantage, as he following a well timed 34... f4! suddenly had a dangerous attack against the white king. White soon had to give up a pawn with an awkward position, and anyway was lost when he in the last move before the time control blundered heavy material.

Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2138) obviously was well prepared for his Caro-Kann Exchange duel against **WIM Ioulia Makka (1983)**, as he came half an hour ahead on the clock and hung on an extra pawn at d5. White had a big advantage as he started a direct kingside attack with 21.f5, but his attacking idea was too optimistic:



22.d6? Bxd6 invited the black bishop at b7 into the battlefield, and following 23.d4? black suddenly could have had a powerful counterattack with 23... Bh2+! followed by 24... Qg3(+). The game continuation 24.Rxd4? Bc5? 25.Bxf7 Qxf7 26.fxg6+ Qxg6 27.Rd7+ Kh8 28.Rxf8+ would have been unclear and double-edged after 28... Rxf8, while 28... Bxf8? lost decisive material after 29.Bd4+. This game in short was far from perfect, but still a very interesting and entertaining attacking battle.

CM Joel Paul Ganta (1993) played a declined Benkő Gambit much too slowly as white against **CM Svetoslav Mihajlov (2094)**, hence black got a promising space advantage without sacrificing a pawn. White's idea of sacrificing a piece was dubious, but still worked out fairly well:



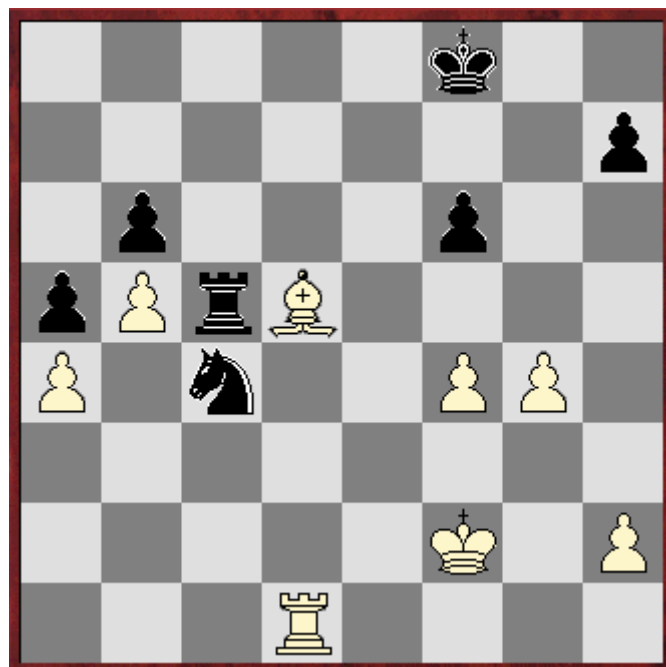
21.Nxc4 dxc4 22.Bxc4 and now the counter-sacrifice 22... Rxb2! 23.Qxb2 Rxf3 24.Bxe6+ Qxe6 25.gxf3 Qxh3 would have been much better for black, while the more careful 22... Nb6? 23.Bb5 Bd7 was rather unclear. Black for an hour or so in the endgame was winning with a knight for two pawns, but then allowed white to exchange the final black pawns. Ganta defended steadily for 50 moves with rook versus rook and knight, and got his well-deserved draw at move 119.

Victor Havik (2078) today had the much better preparation for his Grunfeld Three Knights duel against **Sondre Stai (1842)**. White here came well ahead on the clock with an extra pawn and a strong initiative on the board. Havik spent much time in a still complicated position after his preparation, but after 20 moves he had forced off the queens and was an exchange up in the rooks and minor pieces endgame. His knight at e7 however felt a bit lonely and vulnerable behind the enemy lines. As white forced himself to sacrifice back an exchange, the players suddenly buried a drawish rook endgame after 30 moves.

Harry Zheng (2077) and **Fredrik Valstad Elsness (1873)** meanwhile tested out a Caro-Kann Advance with 3... c5?!, in which black had the better preparation and reached a fully playable isolated pawn position. 18... Bg4?! 19.Nxc5 Bxf3 however entered dubious tactical exchanges, and so white after 25 moves was a very sound pawn up with two rooks, bishop and five pawns against two rooks, knight and four pawns. Black a few moves later on suddenly got counterplay against white's queenside pawns due to a tactical miss from white:



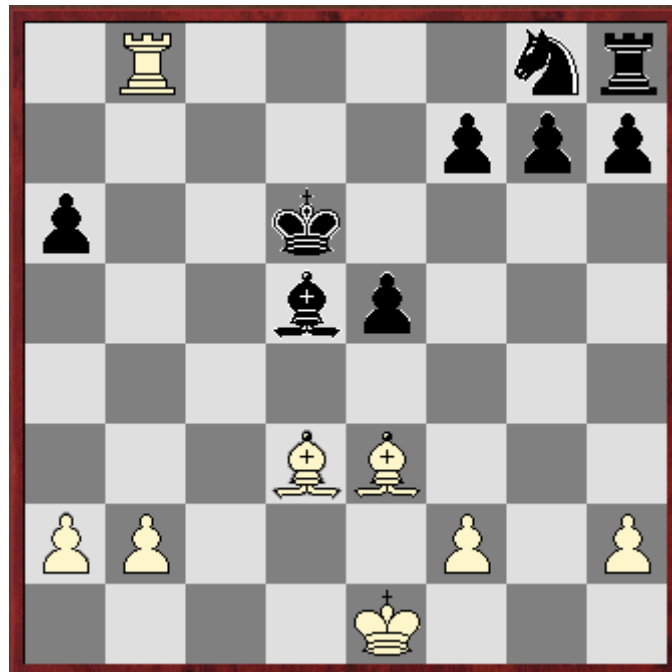
Zheng vs Elsness



31.Rc1? wasted the white advantage as black had 31... Nb2! 32.Rxc5 Nd3+ 33.Ke3 Nxc5. Following 34.Be4 black however should have inserted 34... h5! to destroy the white pawn structure before taking the pawn, as 34... Nxa4? 35.Bxh7 Nc3 36.Bd3 gave white a winning advantage.

Pantham Kaewpitakkun (1989) versus **Victor Lilliehöök (2060)** saw another Sicilian Rossolimo duel. White in this one got a pleasant plus due to his pair of bishops. Exchanging the strong bishop at d5 for a knight at move 27 was a strategical mistake which gave up almost all of white's advantage, although white kept a d-file pressure and again reached a won position as black just before move 40 gave up his key pawn at e5. Forcing a queen exchange in turn was a mistake from white, as black's king became disturbingly active in the bishop endgame. White got the help needed to win this interesting bishop endgame with a one tempo margin.

CM Akshit Kumar J (2172) and **Rune Kleiven Rynning (1813)** discussed a Sicilian Löwenthal variation. Black entered dubious tactical complications, leaving after 22 moves an endgame in which white with a pawn less was winning.



Black would need way too many moves to get out his knight and rook on the kingside. White in the meantime won following 22.--- Kc7 23.Rf8 Bxa2 24.Bxa6 f6 25.b4 Bd5 26.b5 g5 27.Bc5 h5 28.b6+ Kd7 29.Bc8+ Kc6 30.b7 Kc7 31.Bd6+ 1-0



Juodziukynas vs Lien

Sebastian Lien (1885) today came better with his Colle system as white against **Aidas Juodziukynas (1893)**. White's advantage soon became decisive as black's knight on c6 was captured in a pin and went lost before 20 moves. Aidas fought on well and got some counterplay later on. Lien still had a knight for two pawns, and although more than one hour behind on the clock he patiently won the endgame.

Finally, on board 49, young Swede talent **Lavinia Valcu (2070)** went for 1.b3 and a Nimzo-Larsen Attack as white against young Norwegian talent **Håvard Eriksen Bech (1951)**.

After 15 moves the players already had exchanged down to a balanced endgame with two rooks, knight and seven pawns on each side.

Black's decision to trick out the knights and one set of the rooks gave white some advantage in the rook endgame, but material still was equal and black defended well to get a draw after 44 moves.



Valcu vs Bech

FM Casper Dahl Rasmussen (2244) had requested a walk over draw for round 5, and consequently **WCM Sachi Jain (1992)** was given a walk over draw by the pairings. Both are in good health and will be back for round 6 tomorrow!

Open Group

In the **Open**, 20 year old **Amund Pihl Strand (1860)** from Kristiansund won his fifth game in a row tonight – this time as black against Indian **Reddy Sushrutha (1707)**.

Black came better from the Sicilian Alapin opening.

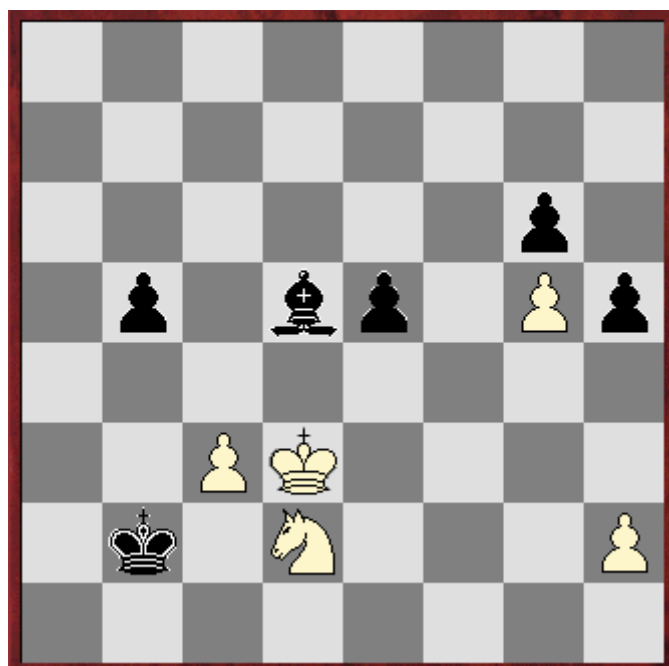
White however found tactical exchanges, leading after 25 moves to a drawish endgame with bishop, knight and five pawns on each side. Exchanging the bishop for a knight here was a

mistake from white. Black following this reached a better endgame with bishop and four pawns against knight and four pawns.

Much thanks to his more active king, he after four hours succeeded in creating a decisive passed b-pawn.

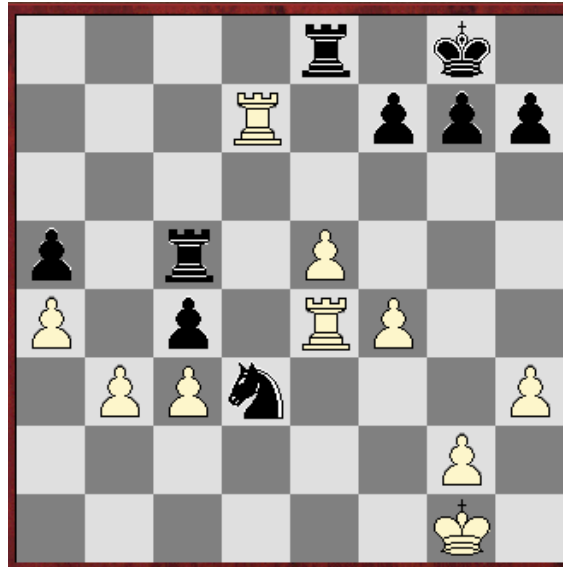


Sushrutha vs Strand (Photo: Anniken Vestby)



51.--- e4+! 52.Kd4 e3 53.Kxe3 Kxc3 54.Nb1 Kb2 55.Nd2 b4 56.Kd4 Kg8 57.Ne4 Kc2 58.Nc5 b3 59.Nxb3 Bxb3 60.Ke5 Kd2 61.Kf5 Bc2 0-1

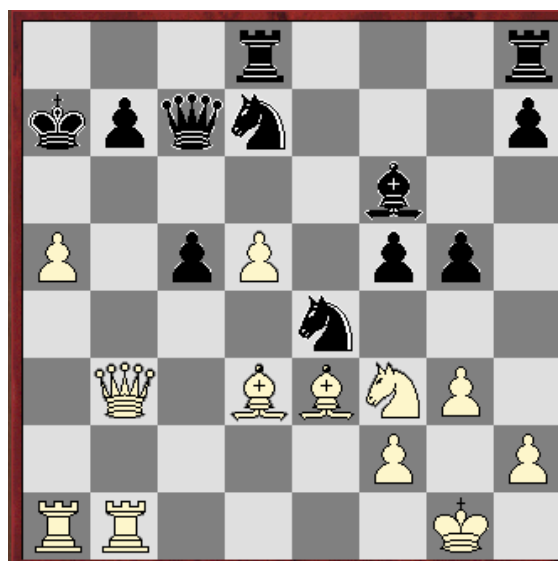
Seventh rated Pihl Strand strengthened his tournament position further as top rated **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1963)** meanwhile failed to win a won endgame as black against third rated **Sigurd Kittilsen (1910)** on the second board. White's try to sacrifice his knight in this much worse rooks and knight endgame objectively was insufficient, but still worked out as black first made some inaccurate moves and then decided to sacrifice back his own knight.



35.--- g5,! intending to sacrifice back the knight with 36.g3 cxb3! 37.Rxd3 Rb8 still should have won for black. Instead 35.--- Nb2? 36.Rd2 cxb3 37.Rxb2 Rxc3 38.Rd4 Rec8 soon resulted in a dead drawn rook endgame.

Third board duel between **Tim Spanton (1876)** and **August Brattgjerd (1689)** also ended up with a drawn rook endgame, but that was two hours earlier on and following a rather sensible game.

Fourth board duel between **Karim Ali (1855)** and **Ida Lahlum (1755)** was a Scandinavian opening duel in which white kept a strong initiative and after three hours decided by a powerful attack:

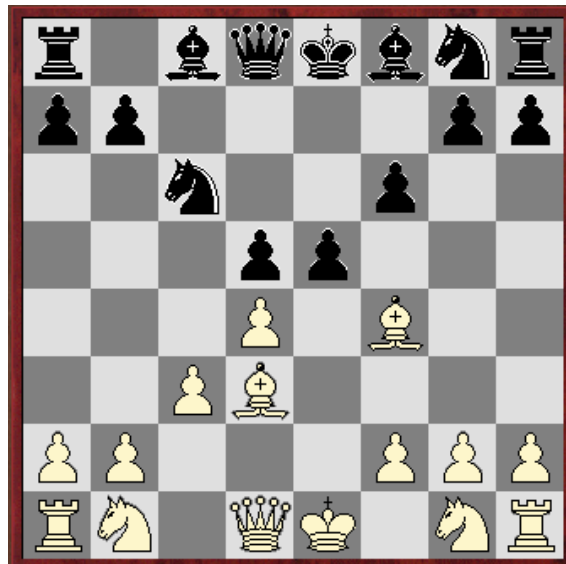


27.Bxe4! fxe4 28.Nxg5! Bxa1 29.Ne6 Qc8 30.Nxc5 Nxc5 31.Qb6+ Ka8 32.Bxc5 Qb8 33.a6 Rd7 34.Rxa1 1-0



Halvorsen vs Kuzmenko (Photo: Anniken Vestby)

Fifth board duel between the Ukrainian veteran **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1747)** and the young Tromsø player **Benjamin Halvorsen (1848)** made a dramatic start, as white in a London system went for a dubious piece sacrifice before 10 moves:



7.Qh5+?! g6 8.Bxg6+ hxg6 9.Qxg6+ Kd7 10.dxe5 fxe5 11.Bg3 Qf6 and black soon consolidated with a decisive material advantage. The lower boards again had many entertaining games, few drawn games and even fewer surprising results.

Amund Pihl Strand following this obviously is leading alone at 5/5, a full point ahead of Hausken, Ali and Halvorsen. Strand-Ali and Hausken-Halvorsen are the top board pairings for round 6, and both games obviously will be very important here.

More pictures from the Open:



Photos by Tom Eriksen and Anniken Vestby