

FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2024

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

6



GM Group

Round 6 saw a big change on the top boards, as so far brilliant GM Surya Shekhtar Ganguly of India lost a long uphill battle as black against GM Rinat Jumabayev of Kazakhstan. Second board duel between GM Erik Blomqvist and GM Ido Gorshtein not that unexpectedly was a sound and solid draw. Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal however won one of his patient endgame wins as white against Indian IM Mohapatra Sidhant on the third board, while Estonian GM Kaido Kulaots won by a nice attack as black against Norwegian IM Jens Ingebretsen on the fourth.

First rated GM Abhimanyu Puranik had to accept a draw as white against solid IM Yahli Sokolovsky on the fifth board, while third-rated GM Krishnan Sasikiran well into the sixth hour succeeded in squeezing out a win as white against IM Jonah B. Willow on the sixth board. Indian GM Raja Rithvik R also steams upward following his win against IM Linus Johansson.

The GM-candidates had a tough round, although English IM Ameet Ghasi succeeded with a counterattack win as black against FM Nicolai Kistrup and it within reach of a decisive third GM norm. Solid Yahli Sokolovsky also is in the run, but probably needs a win in the next round. Swede IM Edvin Trost saved a draw as black against already GM-elect Norwegian IM Elham Amar, but needs a strong spurt to make a GM norm out of this. So is the situation for Norwegian IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy as he today saved a draw from a difficult position against GM Pranav Anand.

Further down the boards we three rounds before the end can find many candidates for norms in the IM or WIM title, but no one is far ahead of schedule – as the Norwegian start rocket FM Saad Elmi today lost his third game in a row as black against IM Frode Elsness. Norwegian junior champion Eivind Grunt Kreken today efficiently used his chance to win as white against FM Yuval Aniv and is on schedule for a norm. The young Dane FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen also is in the run following a long draw as black against IM Tobias Kölle today.

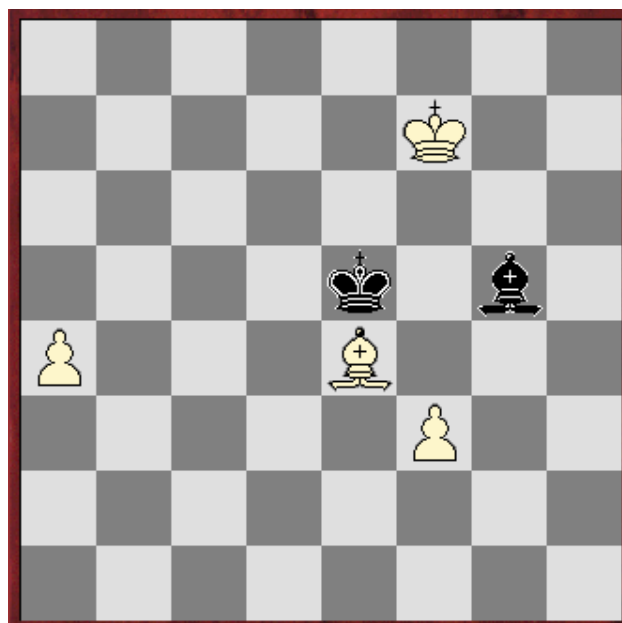
A notable surprise was 48 year old FM Fredrik Lindh winning as black against GM Stellan Brynell, but Lindh following a relatively slow start with 1,5/4 still needs a strong spurt to fight for a norm. Danish veteran Morten Andersen defeating Norwegian IM Helge A Nordahl following a double-edged attacking battle also qualifies as a notable surprise, but Andersen is anyway out of the IM norm run.

At the end of this day the fight for the prizes among top rated GMs hardened further. Jumabayev, Urkedal and Kulaots are now sharing the pole position at 5,0/7, half a point ahead of Sasikiran, Ganguly, Gorshtein, Rithvik, Blomqvist and Ghasi. Top board pairings for the very important round 7 will be Kulaots white against Jumabayev, Ganguly white against Urkedal, Gorshtein white against Sasikiran and Ghasi white against Rithvik.

Today's first board duel between second rated **GM Rinat Jumabayev (2598)** of Kazakhstan and **GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly (2574)** of India was a tight five-hour duel, which might have been extremely important for the top prizes. Jumabayev spent much time on the clock from this Italian opening, but following a stream of exchanges he after 25 moves had a nagging edge with rook, bishop, knight and seven pawns on each side. White here had slightly more active pieces and slightly better pawn structure. Shortly before the first time control black succeeded in exchanging the rooks and activate his remaining pieces, but at the cost of his a-pawn. White following this had two against one pawn on the queenside, but his pawns were scattered and opposite-coloured bishops here helped the black defence. Ganguly in the fifth hour was well ahead on the clock, but under pressure on the board. Trusting the opposite-coloured bishops, black took the a big decision of sacrificing a second pawn to exchange off the knight and white's third last pawn. Margin was very small in this endgame, but Jumabayev apparently had the remaining endgame with light-squared bishop, a-pawn and f-pawn versus dark-squared bishop under control. Ganguly resigned after 66 moves:



Jumabayev vs Ganguly



GM Erik Blomqvist (2511) as white in a Caro-Kann against **GM Ido Gorhstein (2539)** went for an Advance variation which gave white a lasting space advantage. Black for some moves kept an extra pawn at a4, but white could win back the pawn and afterwards had much more space due to his pawns at c5 and e5. Black however had a very solid position with the pawn at c6 as his only possible weakness. No one became surprised when the players agreed a draw while exchanging of the queens after 34 moves.



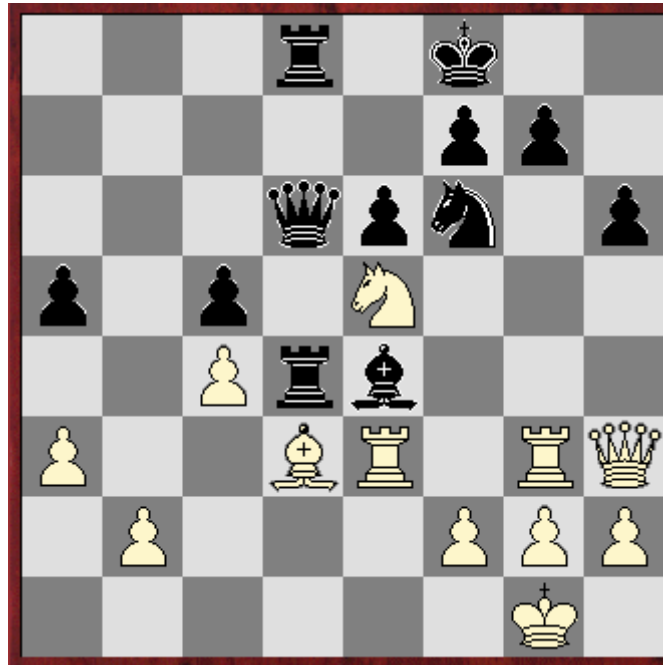
Blomqvist vs Gorhstein

GM Frode Urkedal (2536) and **IM Mohapatra Sidhant (2379)** both played very fast in their Slav opening today. Black apparently was fine after realizing the thematic center break with 16... e5, and white found nothing better than a stream of exchanges leading after 22 moves to a very balanced position with queen, rook and six pawns on each side. Black however had a double b-pawn, and his pawn at b4 following an inaccurate defensive move suddenly was about to fall three moves later. Exchanging the queens afterwards probably was another mistake from black, as white later won the rook endgame rather convincingly due to his more active king and possibility of creating a passed a-pawn.



Urkedal vs Sidhant

IM Jens Evang Ingebretsen (2402) versus **GM Kaido Kulaots (2534)** saw a Bogó-Indian opening in which white placed his queen at h3 and a rook at g3 without getting any real kingside attack, and consequently black came much better after mobilizing his rooks and queen in the open d-file. White's position suddenly collapsed after three hours and within four moves:



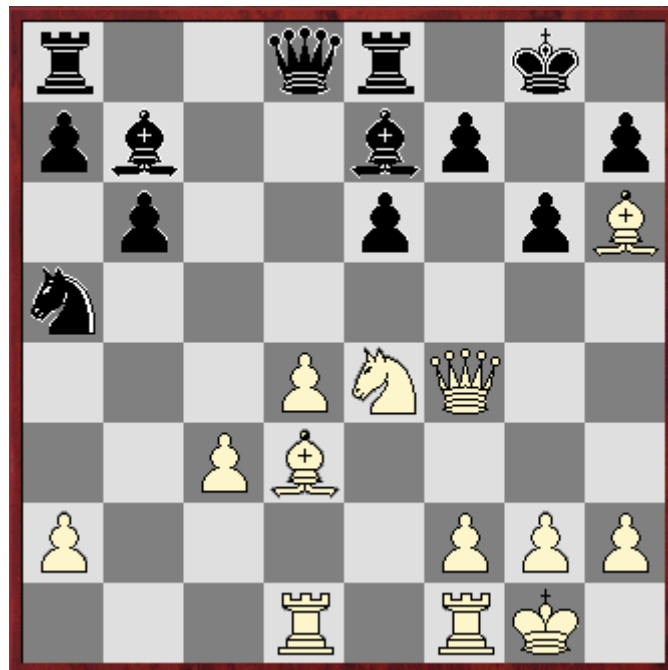
24.f4 Qb6! 25.Qh4?! Qxb2 26.Rxg7 Kxg7 27.Rh3?! Qxg2 mate! 0-1

GM Abhimanyu Puranik (2618) versus **IM Yahli Sokolovsky (2475)** was a Semi-Slav opening almost transposing into a Dutch Stonewall, as black within the first six moves had jumped his knight forward to e4 and protected it with f5. White established a space advantage by playing c5 and went for a queenside pawn attack, while black went for counterplay on the kingside. The position became very closed as white played f4, and a bankbox bishop endgame was agreed a draw after 50 moves.



Puranik vs Sokolovsky

GM Krishnan Sasikiran (2578) as white in a Nimzo-Indian against **IM Jonah B. Willow (2446)** went for a Rubinstein line and due to his pawn at d4 got a small space advantage. Black still had a fairly solid position until he blundered with 19... Na5?:



20.Qe5! threatened mate with 21.Qg7 and forced 20... f6 21.Qxe6+.

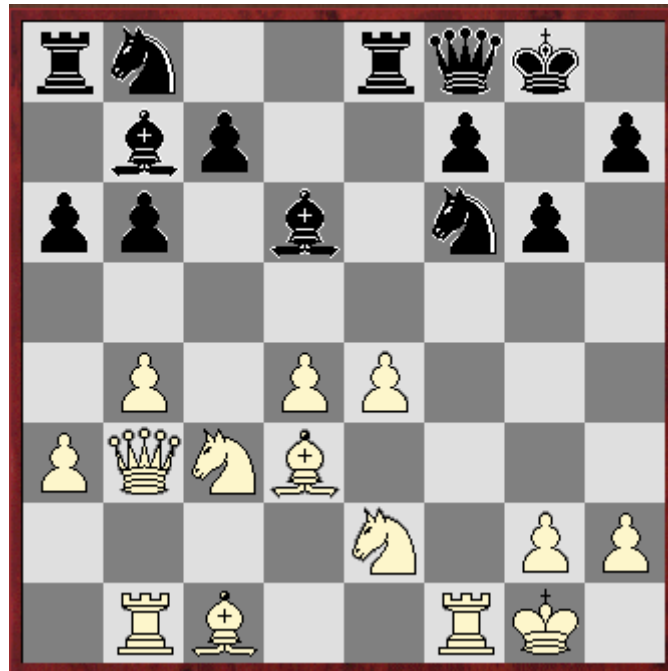
White following this was expected to win well before move 40. Willow however defended bravely, and helped by Sasikiran's clock he somehow survived into a rook and bishop endgame with only one extra pawn for white. Willow due to his active king and white's scattered pawns reportedly had a draw within reach for some moves in the rook endgame with one against three pawns. Black's defensive line here however was very difficult to find. Experienced Sasikiran in the sixth hour reached a technically won rook endgame in which his king and rook could escort in his final pawn.

The highly talented teenagers **IM Elham Amar (2567)** and **IM Edvin Trost (2432)** discussed a closed Sicilian in which white spent 90 minutes and black 95 for the first 20 moves. White had a slight initiative after exchanging three sets of minor pieces, and kept it all into a double rook endgame with four pawns on each side. Trost here was forced to give up a pawn, but in the single rook endgame he could place his rook in an active position behind white's a-pawn and reach a safe draw fortress.



Amar vs Trost

GM Raja Rithvik R (2532) versus **IM Linus Johansson (2427)** saw another Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein duel. White here came much better following a powerful center break with 15.e4 and black's try to capture the center pawn backfired badly:



16.--- Nxe4? 17.Rxf7! Qxf7 18.Bc4 Qxc4 19.Qxc4 Kg7 20.d5 and white won within seven more moves.



Kvaløy (Photo: Anniken Vestby)

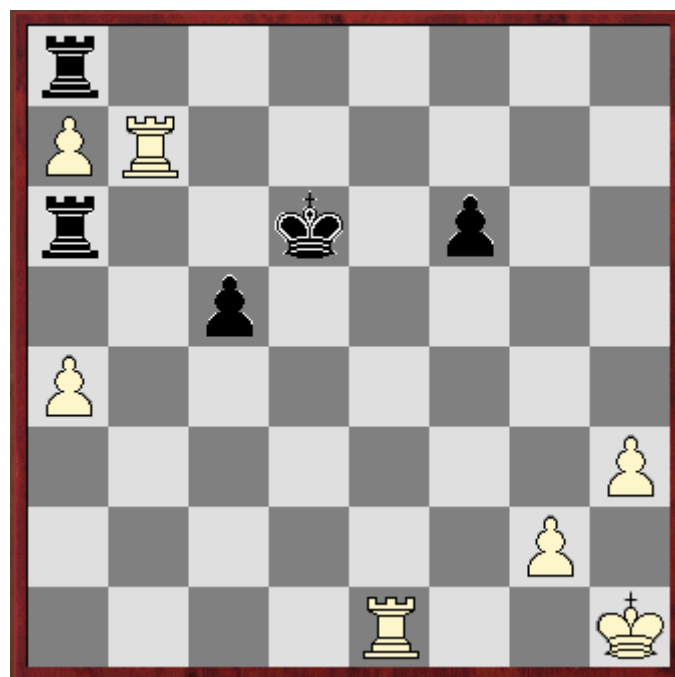
IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2454) versus **GM Pranav Anand (2519)** was a Sicilian Taimanov in which white's h4-h5 gave him no real meat on the kingside. Consequently black with his queenside counterplay came better in the early middle game. Black first had a structural advantage and following a queen exchange he could win a pawn at c2 with an obvious advantage. White's barking bishops in an open position still made it difficult for black to realize his extra pawn. Black eventually succeeded in

exchanging one of the bishops, but material now was much reduced and Kvaløy due to his active king saved the draw confidently with a pawn less in the rook endgame.

IM Stavroula Tsolakidou (2424) as white in a Modern Sicilian line against **IM Isik Can (2493)** kept a space advantage after exchanging three sets of minor pieces. White kept up the pressure all the way into a double rook endgame in which material first was equal, but four isolated pawns still made life difficult for black. White succeeded in picking up two pawns, but having less than one minute on the clock she stumbled in the final hurdle at move 40:



Tsolakidou vs Can

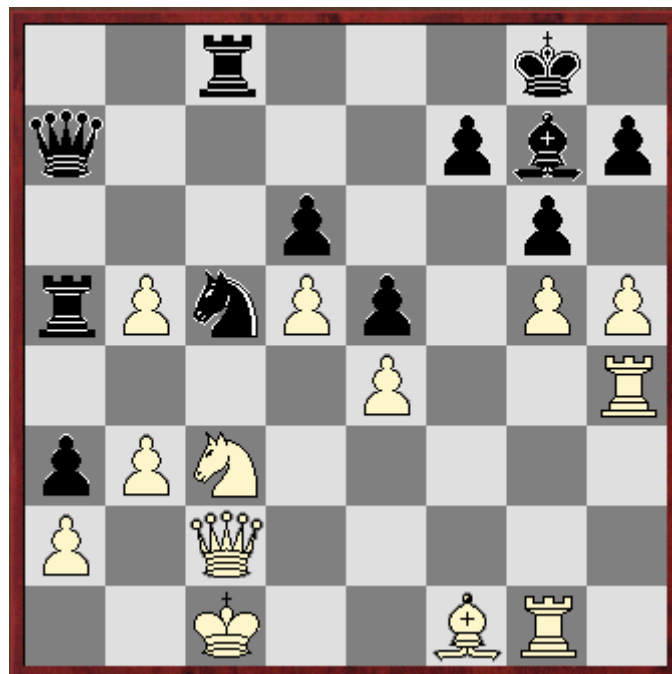


40.Rf7! R8xa7 41.Rxf6+ Kd7 42.Rf5 should win. White instead went for 40.Rf1? and black after 40.--- R8xa7! 41.Rxf6+ Ke5 42.Rxa6 Rxa6 proved able to scrape a draw in the single rook endgame due to his passed c-pawn.

FM Nicolai Kistrup (2324) versus **IM Ameet Ghasi (2485)** was a positionally complex King's Indian duel, in which white played h3 followed by long castling and g4 to start a pawn storm on the kingside. Computers around move 14-18 gave white a notable advantage, but the position was complex and white made a strategic error as he at move 19 gave up his dark-squared bishop for a knight at c5. Both players here were seriously short of time after 25 moves, and white had only minute left when he blundered two moves later on:



Kistrup vs Ghasi



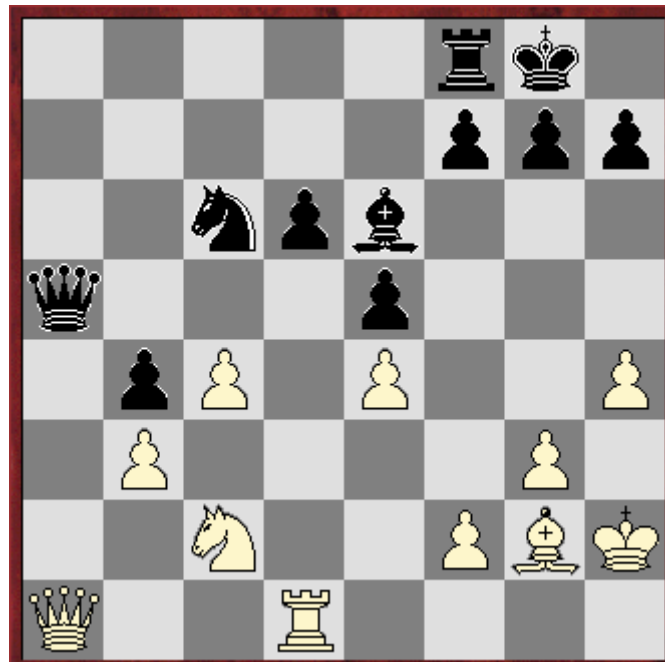
27.Rg3? Nxb3+ 28.Qxb3 Qf2 29.Rhh3 Qxf1+ gave black an advantage. Following some more time trouble mistakes black could complete his attack against the white king before move 40.

The young Bulgarian **GM Momchil Petkov (2500)** had the better preparation for a Sicilian Najdorf duel as white against **FM Theodor Kenneskog (2358)**, and his kingside pawn storm soon appeared more threatening than black's counterplay on the queenside. Black's pawn sacrifice at b5 did not work out too well as white kept the pawn at b5 plus the more dangerous attack. Both players spent a lot of time in the middle game, but white was ahead on the clock as well. As black was unwilling to accept a clearly worse endgame he instead ran into a mating attack and stopped the clock after 41 moves.



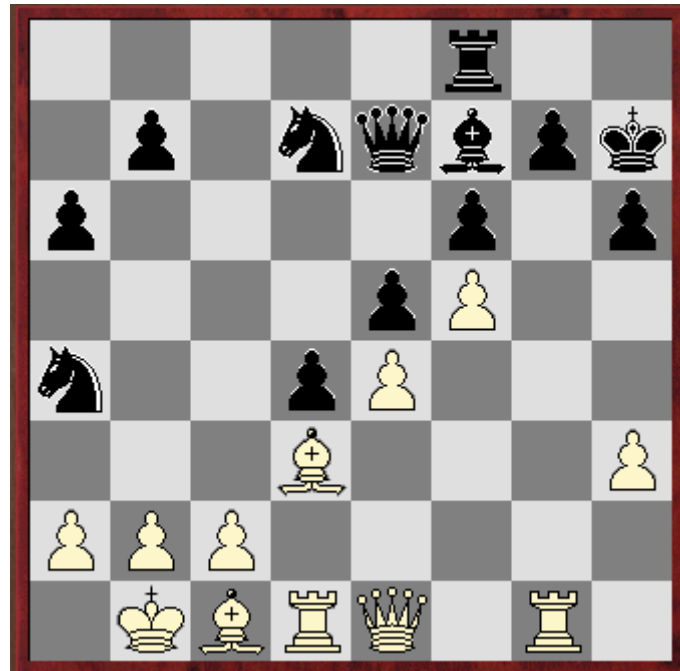
Petkov vs Kenneskog

IM Semen Mitusov (2487) and **IM Ludvig Carlsson (2350)** discussed a Sicilian Sveshnikov, in which black was well ahead on the clock and perfectly fine on the board after exchanging one set of knights and the dark-squared bishops. White however had pressure against the backward pawn at d6, and this combined with black's weak first rank suddenly decided the game:



22.--- Ra8? was a wrong plan losing the game after 23.Qxa5 Rxa5??, as white after 24.Rxd6 Rc5 25.Nxb4 had won two pawns and was about to win a piece.

IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2336) versus **GM Tiger Hillarp (2473)** was another complex Sicilian duel, this one a Najdorf, in which white first had the upper hand.



White at move 26 had a pair of bishops and the safer king. Vestby-Ellingsen however had only four minutes left on the clock and became too eager for a direct hit against the black king: 26.Rxg7+? Kxg7 27.Bxh6 Kxh6 28.Qh4+ Bh5 29.Rg1 Qe8 30.Rg6+?! Qxg6 31.fxg6 Kxg6 – and black’s rook, bishop and knight turned out to outweigh white’s queen.

IM Frode Elsness (2437) versus **FM Saad Elmi (2344)** was a tense Benoni duel in which white came slightly better following a thematic Nd2-Nc4 maneuver. At move 25 black apparently did fine with a dark-squared bishop at d4, after exchanging white’s bishop for a knight at g3. Elsness however succeeded in demonstrating that black’s advanced g- and h-pawns weakened his own king too much. White could start a direct attack on the pawns and then force a queen exchange, well before move 40 reaching a won rook endgame with three extra pawns. Saad Elmi first won three games in a row and then «castled long» by losing the next three, but is still well in the run for his third IM-norm after having played five opponents above 2400.

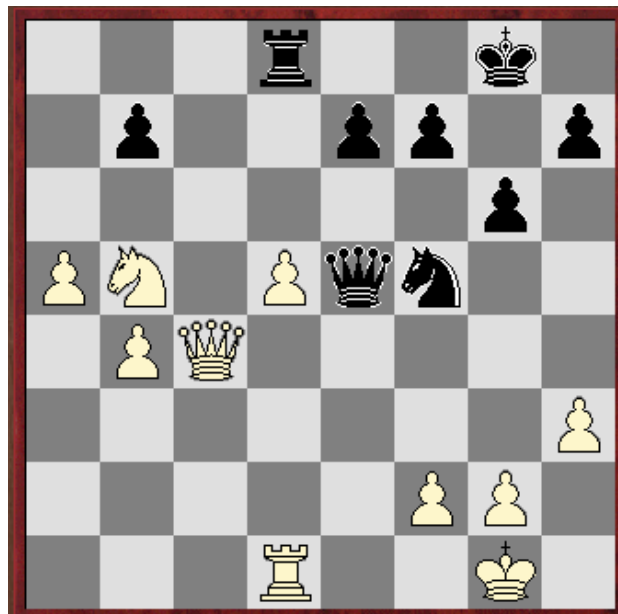


Elsness vs Elmi

German **IM Tobias Kölle (2460)** and Dane **FM Viktor Haarmark Nielsen (2351)** discussed a tense Queen's Gambit Semi-Tarrasch. Pawns at e5 and d4 gave white a space advantage, but black after exchanging two sets of minor pieces did fine with his knight at d5. White eventually succeeded in opening the kingside and exchanging the knight, but black was closer to something in the rook endgame before it all petered out with a draw after five hours.

IM Hampus Sörensen (2428) as white against **FM Gunnar Lund (2335)** entered a Queen's Gambit Exchange line and then started a traditional minority attack with b4 and b5. It did not give much as black was allowed to play c5 followed by c4. Black following this had a slight initiative, but the position was rather static and a draw was agreed by repetition just before move 40.

24 year old Estonian **IM Mai Narva (2399)** as white in a Caro-Kann Panov against 16 year old Israeli **FM Roy Vagman (2311)** successfully hung on the extra pawn at d5. White had fairly active pieces and after 25 moves had kept her extra pawn into a position with queen, rook, knight and six pawns against queen, rook, knight and five pawns. Black anyway was in trouble when he blundered:



25.--- e6? was a natural but a bit naive attempt to win back the pawn. White instructively turned the d-file pin against black with 26.d6!, and black already had enough after 26.--- Nxd6 27.Qc5!

IM Dushyant Sharma (2331) versus **IM Hasan Huseyin Celik (2417)** saw a Sicilian Richter-Rauzer discussion, in which white kept a slight space advantage following an early queen exchange at b6. Black gave up his light-squared bishop for a knight at d5, and then realized the f5 break with enough counterplay on the kingside to balance the chances. The draw after 26 moves came a bit suddenly, but the position was approximately balanced and winning attempts would involve a notable risk for both sides.



Sharma vs Celik

The Indian duel between **IM Ameya Audi (2378)** and **WGM Pallathur Nandhidhaa (2305)** meanwhile had started up with a Classical French, in which white due to his pawn at e5 first had a slight initiative. Black however proved able to exchange off dangers of a direct kingside attack, and in the fourth hour black's c-file was more important than white's f-file. Black in turn became too helpful exchanging off pieces just before the time control. Following this the remaining minor piece endgame in the fifth hour was a rather safe draw.



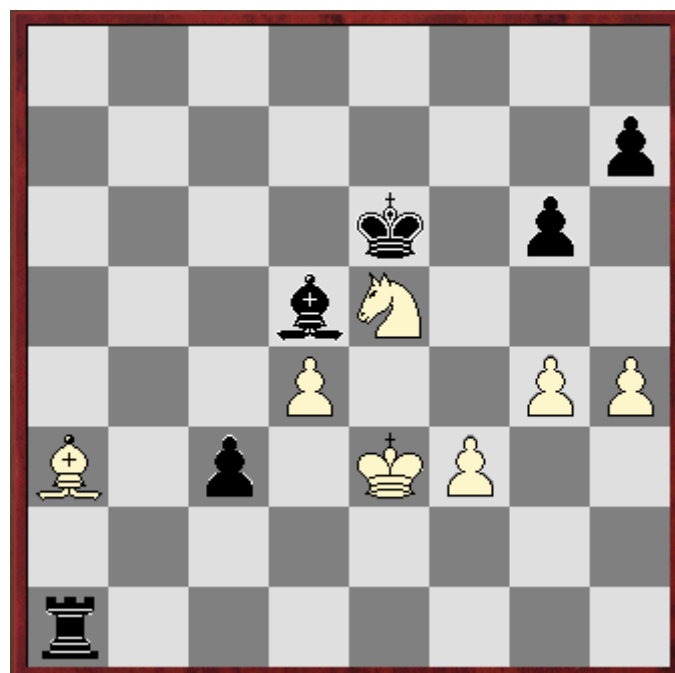
Nandhidhaa vs Audi

Peder Marcus Aamodt (1941) versus **IM Sambit Panda (2377)** was a Caro-Kann Exchange line looking more and more like a French. The queens and three sets of minor pieces were exchanged within the first 25 moves, leaving white with the better light-squared bishop and a very slight pressure against black's backward pawn at e6. Black had enough pieces to protect the pawn, and as he succeeded in exchanging the bishop the remaining rook endgame after the first time control was drawish. The IM played on for 20 more moves, but found no way to put pressure on his young opponent with only three pawns left on each side.

FM Rithvik Krishnan (2277) and **IM Nico Chasin (2447)** discussed an Italian opening in which one set of knights and the dark-squared bishops were exchanged, leaving a position which to a large extent circled around the white pawn at e5. Pushing the pawn forward to e6 at move 31 reportedly was fine, but white's position collapsed as he blundered this key pawn in the very next move. A sound pawn up, Chasin immediately turned the e-file against white and had a winning attack within a few more moves.

The Indian duel between **GM Praneeth Vuppala (2506)** and **FM Daakshin Arun (2283)** was a King's indian fianchetto, in which the queens and two sets of minor pieces were exchanged before 25 moves. Following sound moves from both players, chances later remained balanced all into a rook and minor piece endgame which was agreed a draw after 54 moves.

The Swedish duel between **GM Stellan Brynell (2406)** and **FM Fredrik Lindh (2256)** started up like a Sicilian Rossolimo, and white first had a small edge. Black's pair of bishops however was a resource in a half-open position, and chances after 20 moves were about balanced. Black later took over the initiative and established a passed pawn at c4. Both players under time pressure made some mistakes between move 30 and 40, but black now had a strong initiative and went on to win an exchange as white felt forced to eliminate the passed pawn at c3. After 40 moves the remaining endgame with rook, bishop and three pawns against bishop, knight and four pawns was very difficult for white, and Lindh within five more moves succeeded in establishing a new passed c-pawn which soon decided in his favour:



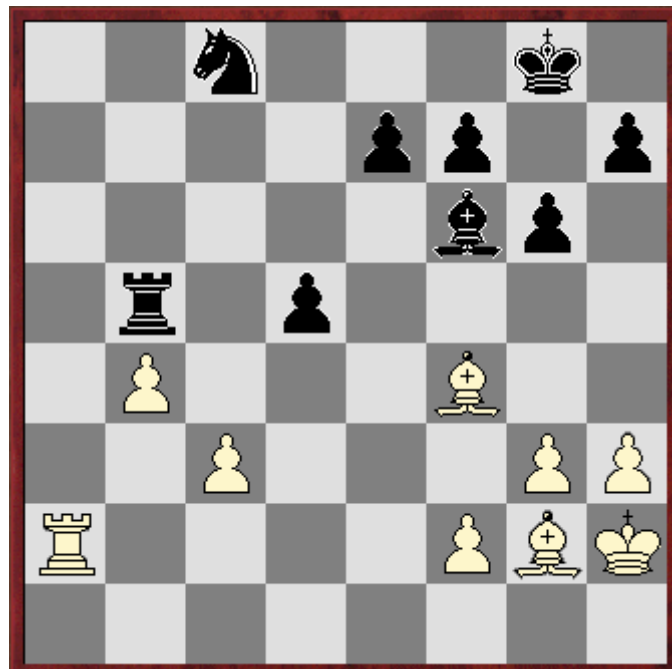


Mihajlov

IM Sebastian Mihajlov (2373) versus **FM Ward Al-Tarboush (2277)** was another Sicilian Sveshnikov involving lots of early exchanges. Al-Tarboush as usual was well ahead on the clock, and around move 20-30 had a promising kingside pressure. White in search of counterplay forced an exchange of two rooks for a queen, but black still kept his pressure. Black appeared close to winning as he just before move 40 gave up one of his rooks to trick in a new queen at e1. Black following this got queen, bishop and two pawns against queen and four pawns. Black however had difficulties escaping

the white checks without losing his remaining pawns, and the game was actually drawn by a stalemate after 76 moves.

Eivind Grunt Kreken (2215) as white in a talented junior duel against **FM Yuval Yaniv (2368)** went for a King's Indian Advance, in which the queens and two sets of minor pieces left within the first 22 moves. White held a slight plus due to his pair of bishops, but black had fair drawing chances until an instructive blunder:



33.--- Nb6? 34.Ra5! traps the black rook at b5, and white's new passed pawn soon decided after the forced 34.--- Rxa5 35.bxa5.

CM John Stark (1947) versus **IM Moksh Doshi (2353)** was an English opening in which black got the pair of bishops plus some pressure against white's isolated pawn at b3. White however had the most powerful bishop at b2 plus a strong knight at e5 and came better from the opening.

At move 17-18 both players missed that white had a very promising, although far from obvious, knight sacrifice with 18.Nxf7. Black three moves later could win the white pawn at b3. White had approximately enough compensation, but gave black a decisive initiative as he became too eager to win back the pawn immediately.

The Scandinavian duel between **Morten Andersen (2178)** and **IM Helge A Nordahl (2330)** saw a tense King's Indian opening, in which both players castled short and then tried to attack the opponent's king. Black first had the better attack following a too loose 21.g4? from white, but as black missed the critical continuation white still came much better around move 25-30. Although the position remained very complex and both players according to the computers made some mistakes, white later held the initiative. Before 40 moves he could exchange queens to reach a knight endgame in which his passed a-pawn gave a decisive advantage.

Ani Avetisyan (1840) versus **IM Erik Hedman (2311)** was a Queen's Indian fianchetto in which white after exchanging the queens kept a slight edge, due to her extra space and pressure against the backward black pawn at d6. The 15 year old white player at move 26 remarkably left a repetition to play for a win against the experienced IM. Exchanging the knights at d5 later however was not the best plan for white, as black had no more worries about his pawn at d6 and got a slight initiative in the double rook endgame.

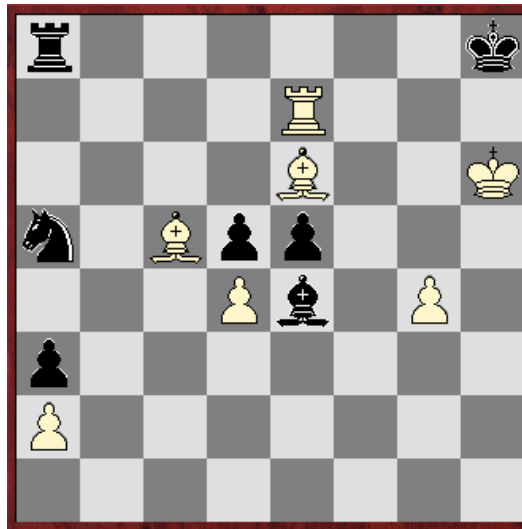


Avetisyan vs Hedman

The single rook endgame arising after 55 moves appeared promising for black due to his more active king, but white defended very well and early in the sixth hour reached a totally drawn endgame with rook versus rook and pawn.

Rounaiv Rana (2099) versus **FM Håvard Haug (2341)** was a Queen's Gambit Exchange in which white played an ambitious Botvinnik set up with Nge2 and f3. Black however came better as white did not find the right moment to follow up with e4. After exchanging the queens white was finally ready to play e4 at move 22, but then it only weakened further his pawns. Black soon could pick up the loose white pawn at d4, and before 40 moves reached a rook endgame which due to black's queenside pawn majority was a trivial win.

Teenagers **FM Shazil Shehzad (2305)** and **Sergey Eliseev (2131)** know each other very well from many earlier tournaments in Stavanger, but still produced a hard-fought and creative game today. White went for a positional English opening, and following an early queen exchange got a clear advantage due to his pair of bishops and c-file. Eliseev for a long while defended well, gradually activating his pieces to balance the chances in the fourth hour. Shehzad still played for a win, creatively sacrificing a pawn to open the position for his rook and two bishops. This succeeded as black during mutual time pressure failed to find the best defence, allowing white to mobilize his remaining pieces including the king for a decisive attack. Tactically gifted Shehzad early in the sixth hour got the chance to finish the game with a rare and nice rook sacrifice:



57.Rh7+! Bxh7 58.Be7 – and the bishops supported by the king completed the mating attack.

Martin Øksendal (2086) as white against **Sondre Melaa (2285)** kept the initiative from another Ruy Lopez with the 3... Nge7. White however became too eager to open up the position and sacrificed his e-pawn much too loose at move 18. Black said thank you for the pawn and soon demonstrated his pieces to be the more active. 26... c5 apparently ran into a disturbing e-file pin, but Melaa had it all under control:



27.Bg4 Bxg4! 28.Rxe8 Rfxe8 29.h3 Bh5 30.g4 fxg3 e.p. – and black's armada of pieces soon overcome the rather lonely white queen.

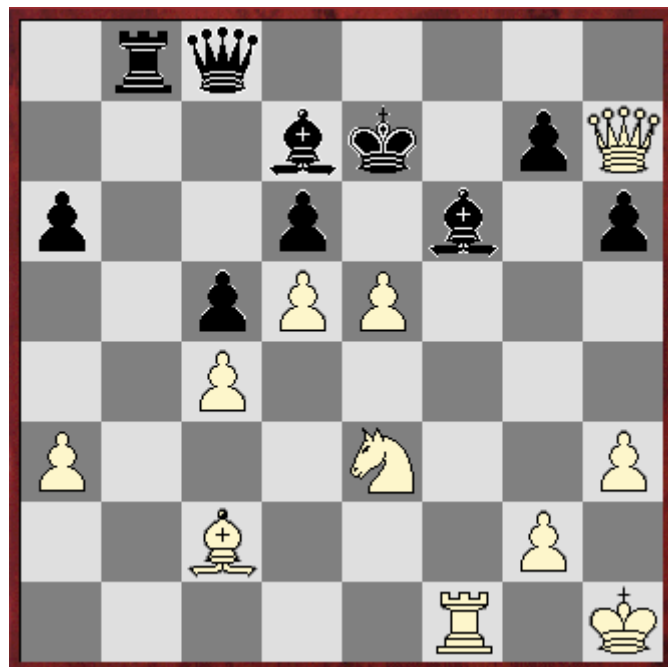
Norwegian junior **Shadi Sian (2076)** as white in a Semi-Slav against Englishman **FM James Moreby (2260)** today went for a dubious mixture of two set ups, first exchanging at d5 and then fianchettoing his bishop to g2. Black had no problems from the opening, but white later could blow up the center with e4 and get a pair of bishops. Black's position after a queen exchange still was solid, with a promising knight square at d5. White took the safe path by exchanging his dark-squared bishop for black's knight before it could reach d5.



Moreby vs Sian

Players following this soon exchanged down to a balanced rook endgame in which they after 55 moves were about to exchange the final pawns.

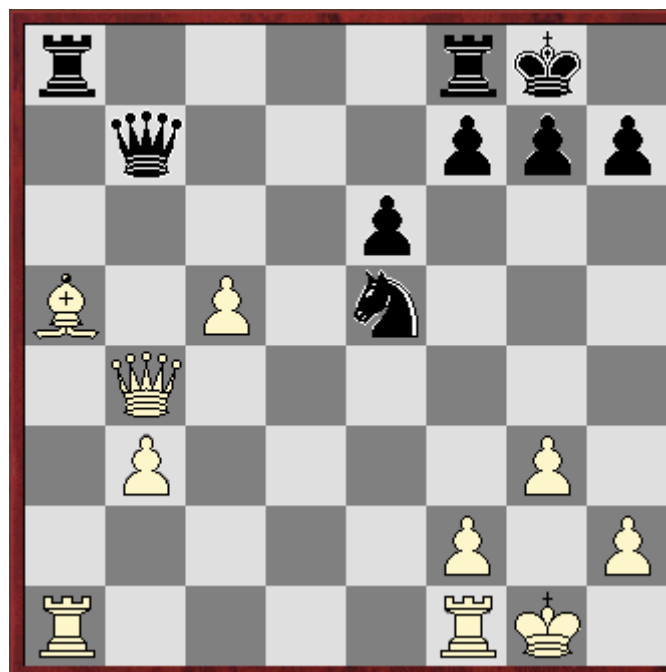
The young teenager duel between Norwegian **Isak Vinh Brattgjerd (2228)** and Englishman **Harry Zheng (2077)** was a positionally complex Ruy Lopez Chigorin line. Black's position in the middle game apparently was promising as he had two rooks in the open b-file plus a pair of bishops. White still was better due to his space advantages and possibilities of a kingside attack. White successfully intervened on the weak light kingside squares with his queen, but the outcome still was in doubt until the very last moves before the time control.



Nothing is yet decided after the natural 39.--- Bxe5, but Zheng had only seconds left on the clock and underestimated the tactical dangers: 39.--- dxe5? 40.d6+! Kxd6 41.Rd1+ Kc7 42.Nd5+. White's attack soon prevailed.

CM Andreas Skotheim (2214) as white in a Sicilian against **Per Fredrik Holand (2068)** made a modest closed start with 2.Nc3 and 3.Bb5. White however understood the position much better than black following an early exchange at c6, and white's active knights combined with the e5 pawn gave him a dangerous kingside attack before 20 moves. Black in desperation gave up two minor pieces for a rook, but white had it under control and after 35 moves was two pieces up with a fairly safe king.

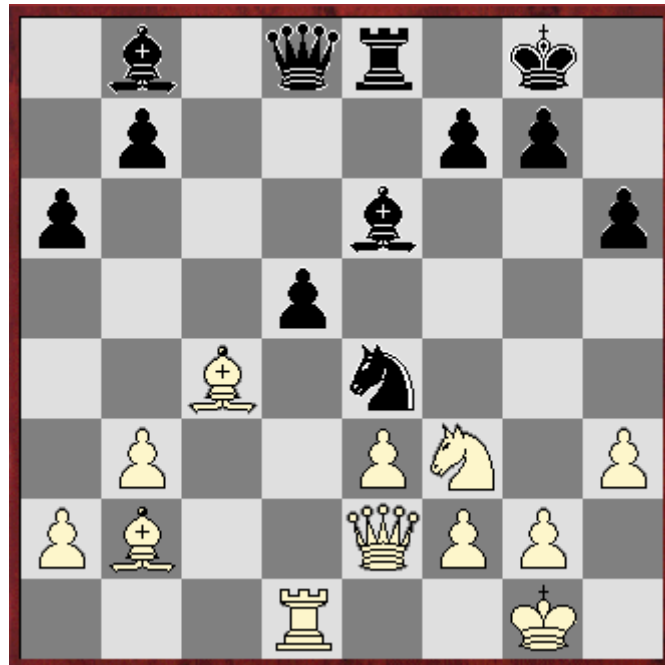
The Indian duel between **WFM Shivika Rohilla (2003)** and **Aniruddh Chatterjee (2182)** was a half-open Catalan in which black first hung on an extra pawn at c4, but then gave back the pawn at a5. Both players made the same misunderstanding about a piece exchange at c5 which could have given black a clear advantage, and then the game was drawn by a repetition after 26 moves. White now was a pawn up and had two connected passed pawns on the queenside, but due to the dangers for her king in the now open Catalan-diagonal she could not leave the repetition.



22.--- Nf3+ 23.Kh1 Qc6 24.Qb6 Qe4 25.Qb4 Qc6 26.Qb6 ½-½

Norwegian **Oda Kofoed Skramstad (1945)** and English **Indy Soutcott-Moyers (2120)** in another teenager duel investigated a Queen's Gambit Declined – also leading to an approximately balanced position with an isolated queen's pawn. Oda soon decided to exchange her isolated pawn with 14.d5, leaving a completely open center and a fairly balanced position. After exchanging three sets of minor pieces, black if anywas was slightly better due to his nice bishop at b7. White's position however was very sound and black accepted a draw by repetition after 23 moves.

WCM Anishka Vikram (1995) versus **Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2138)** started up with the positional Anti-Meran line of a Semi-Slav. Players here reached a well known isolated queen's pawn position under approximately balanced circumstances. White later got a slight pressure against the key pawn at d5, but became too eager to eliminate it:

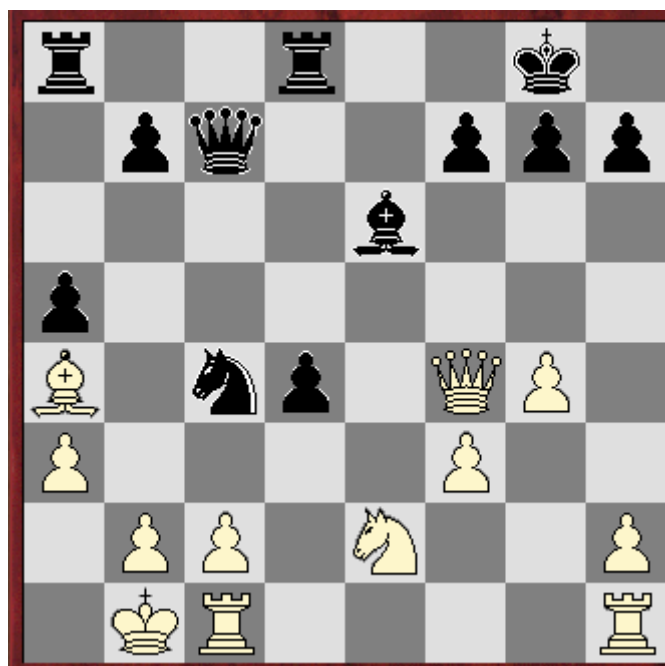


24. Bxd5?? Bxd5 25. Qd3 and now 25.--- Qc7! 26. Qxd5 Qc2 with a double threat at b2 and f2 is winning for black. Myagmarsuren instead went for 25.--- Qe7? 26. Qxd5 Nxf2 27. Qd4 Be5 28. Nxe5 Nxd1 29. Qxd1 f6 30. Ng4 – and the game was agreed drawn in a balanced if still very interesting position.

The Modern Rapport-Jobava system with 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Bf4 has been tested by several talented young players this tournament, and today came on board in the game between **Gokul Thangavel (1990)** and **Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2118)**. White tried to hang on a loose extra pawn at c5, but black came better as he could win in back with a small tactical trick. Castling long here was risky at best from a white perspective. Fiskaaen in an inspired mood pushed his d-pawn forward with a strong initiative and soon smashed through against the white king:

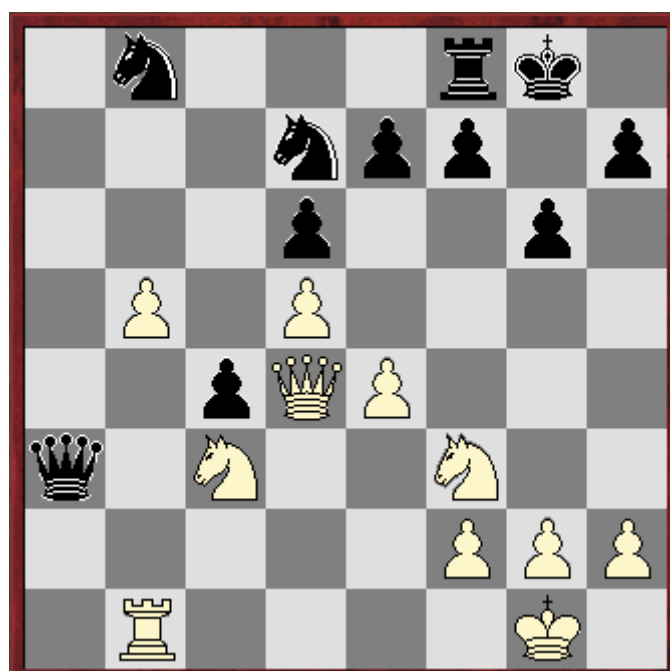


Thangavel



22.--- Qb6 23.Bb3 Nxa3+ 24.Ka2?! Nxc2! and white stopped the clock.

Rishi Vijayakumar (2156) versus **Pantham Kaewpitakkun (1989)** saw a Benkő Gambit in which white first took the pawn at b5, and then after exchanging all the bishops agreed to return the pawn at b2. The passed pawn at b5 later gave white a sound plus. White however became too careless when trying to advance the b-pawn, somehow forgetting that black also had a passed pawn:

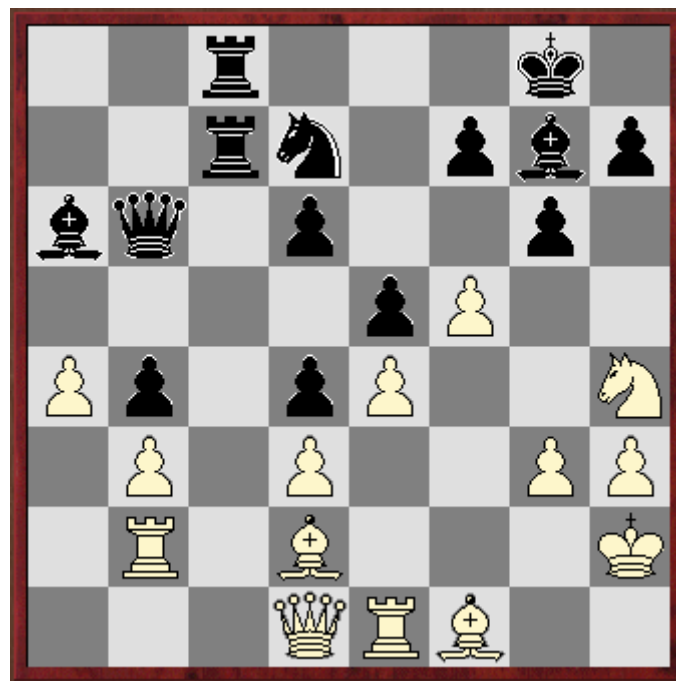


20.b6? Nxb6! 21.Rxb6 Qc1+ 22.Nd1 c3 23.Qxc3 Qxd1+ with a balanced position. White later again came clearly better, but again wasted his chances, and so the game after 40 moves had reached a dead end knight endgame.

FM Vegar Koi Gandrud (2293) versus **Ask Amundsen (2069)** was a Queen's Gambit Accepted with many exchanges, reaching after 25 moves a drawish endgame with queen, knight and six pawns on each side. Black however played inaccurately from the start of this endgame, allowing white to pick up black's advanced pawn at a5 by a tactical trick. As black missed his chance for counterplay against the white king he soon drifted into a lost endgame, as the too advanced pawn at b4 now also was very weak.

CM Joel Paul Ganta (1993) versus **FM Casper Rasmussen (2244)** saw an apparently solid Russian opening. It became much less solid as black decided both to open the position and to give white the pair of bishops. White following this after 20 moves suddenly had a winning attack. Ganta following a tactical Bxh6 missed the best attacking continuation and allowed black to exchange the queens, but white still came a very sound pawn up in the bishop endgame. Opposite-coloured bishops here gave black some hope for a draw, but white in fact was just winning as black was soon stuck with a passive rook at f8 and a very weak pawn at f7.

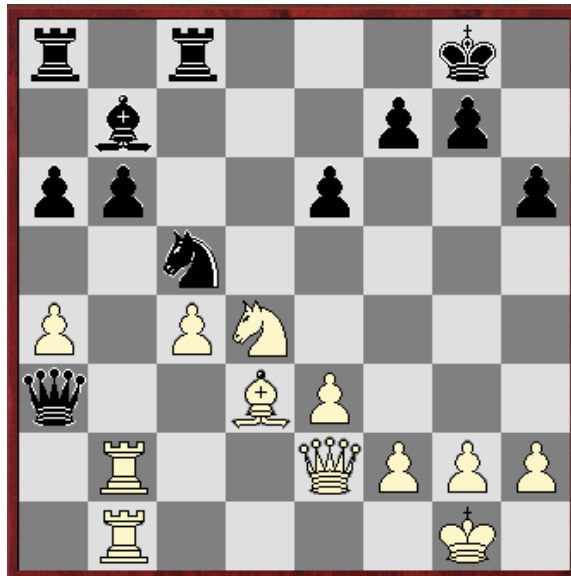
Sondre Stai (1842) and **CM Akshit Kumar J (2172)** discussed a closed and heavyweight Sicilian in which no piece or pawn left the board for the first 18 moves. Black behind the fronts had made the much better maneuvering and established a notable space advantage. Following the first exchanges he soon got a clear advantage due to his monopoly in the c-file. Black instructively sacrificed an exchange to establish a passed c-pawn and open the queenside in his favour:



26.--- Rc3! 27. Bxc3 bxc3 28.Ra2 Nc5 29.fxg6 hxg6 30.Qf3 Qxb3 31.Rf2 c2 and black soon won.

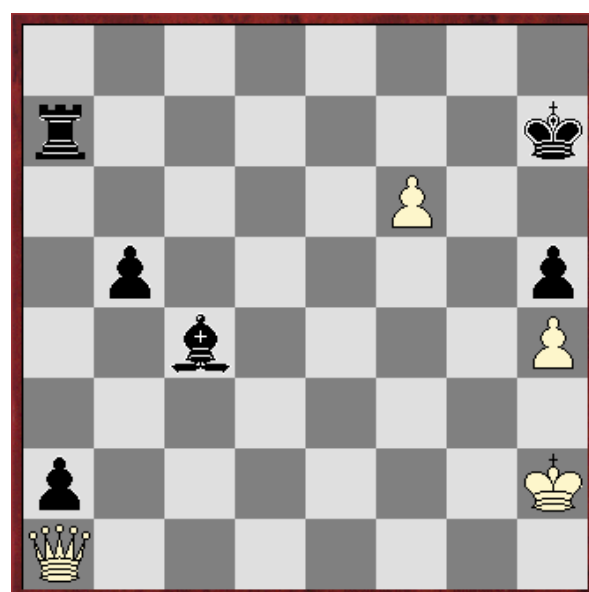
CM Svetoslav Mihajlov (2094) versus **Sebastian Lien (1885)** was another Queen's Gambit Exchange duel. In this one white proved able to play f3 followed by e4, and a misunderstood c4-advance from black gave white a more or less free hand on the kingside. Black avoided dangers of a direct mate by exchanging the queens at move 38, but white had all the better pieces and easily won the remaining rook and bishop endgame.

Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1985) versus **Victor Havik (2078)** was another Queen's Gambit, but in this one black came up creative counterplay on the queenside. His queen adventure turned out to be justified despite some tactical complications:



24.Bc2 Nxa4 25.Ra2 Qxa2 26.Bh7+ Kxh7 29.Qxa2 Nc3 30.Qc2 Be4 31.Qxc3 Bxb1 gave black a clear advantage with two rooks and one pawn for the queen.

Havik later played very well until reaching a won endgame with rook, bishop and passed pawns against queen, but then after five hours missed a tiny and not unimportant detail:



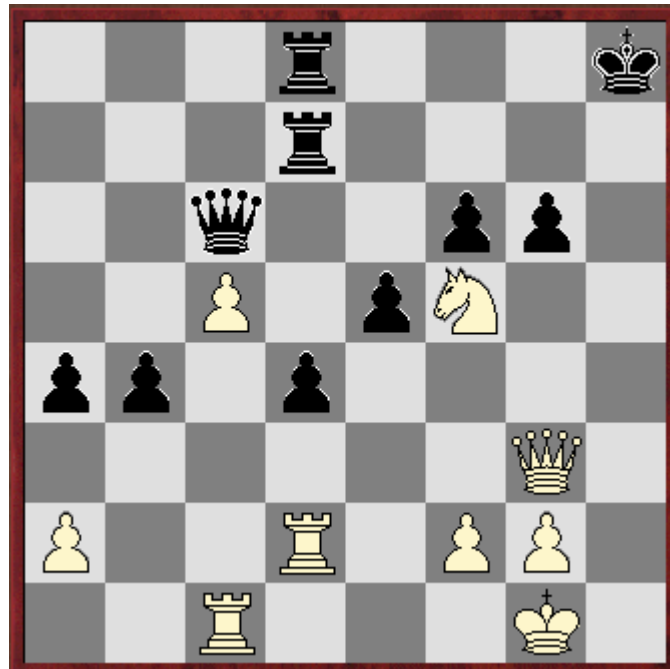
50.--- b4?? 51.Qd1! a1Q 52.Qxh5+ Kg8 with a draw by perpetual check.

Rion Okuno (1981) and **Amadeus Hestvik Evenshaug (2035)** discussed a Sicilian Kan, in which white came slightly better with more space and chances for a kingside attack. Black however could take over the initiative as white was helpful to close down the kingside. Following this black had a slight initiative before accepting a draw by repetition after 46 moves.

12 year old **Victor Lilliehöök (2060)** and 11 year old **Fredrik Valstad Elsness (1873)** discussed a Caro-Kann Panov Attack. White from the opening definitely had the better arguments, as he could advance his queenside pawns and after 13 moves had established a dominating passed pawn at c6 – supported by a pawn at b5. Black probably made a good decision to sacrifice a piece for two pawns, although white got another passed pawn at c5 and had a close to winning position in the middle game. Lilliehöök however again ran seriously short of time for 40 moves and suddenly allowed Elsness to turn the attack against white’s queen:



Lilliehöök vs Elsness

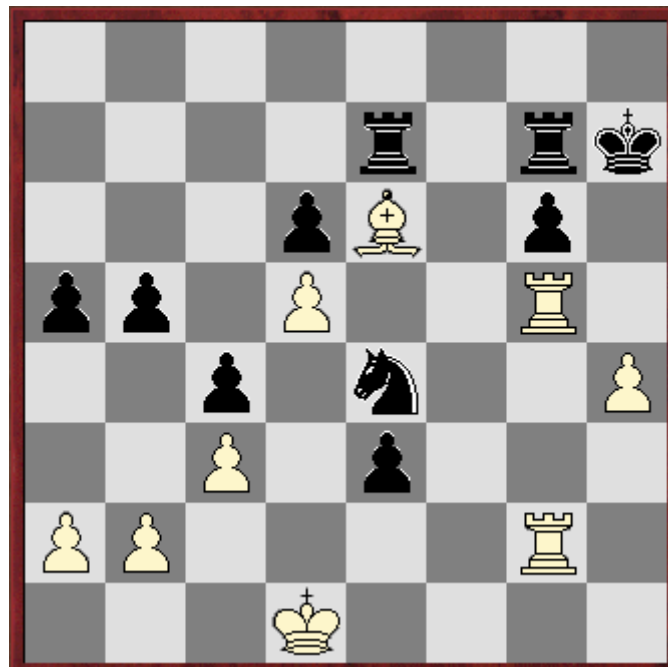


36.Qxg6?? Rg8 37.Qh6 Rh7 – and white surprisingly had nowhere to hide his apparently active queen! The outcome following 38.Qxh7+ Kxh7 was still not given, but black later neatly gave up his own queen to let a passed pawn decide.

Rune Kleiven Rynning (1813) versus **WIM Ioulia Makka (1983)** saw an unbalanced and creative Modern opening, in which white castled long while black put her king at f7. White first had the more promising attack here, although black proved able to put her king on g8 and exchange the worst dangers. Black had an extra passed pawn in the rooks and minor pieces endgame, but white's active pieces on the kingside still made this unclear. The decision came by a blunder soon after the first time control:

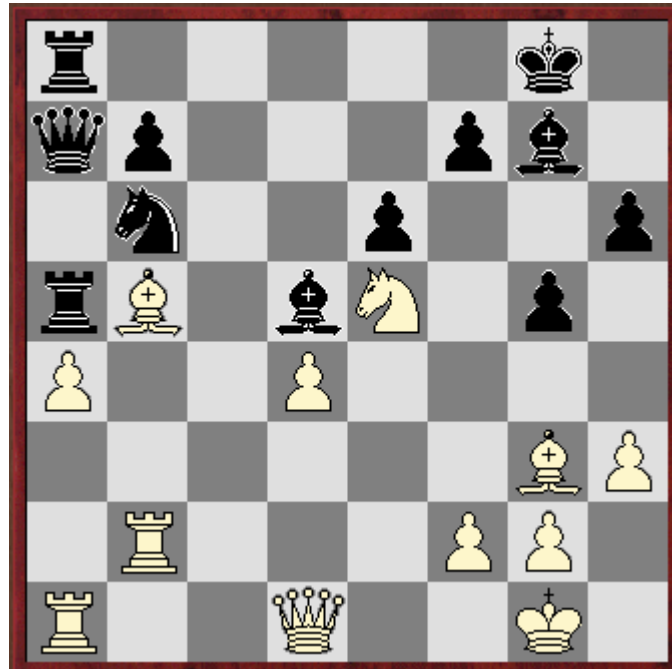


Makka vs Rynning



41.Rxg6! e2+ 42.Ke1 Rxg6 43.Bf5 Nc5 and now 44.Bxg6+ Kh6 45.Rg3 Rg7 46.h5 still is very exciting. White however forgot to ask himself the good old key question about why the opponent played her last move, and soon lost after 44.h5?? Nd3+ 45.Bxd3 cxd3 46.hxg6+ Kg7.

The talented teenager duel between Norwegian **Aidas Juodziukynas (1893)** and Swede **Lavinia Valcu (2070)** started up with a Queen's Pawn opening, leading to a roughly balanced position with an isolated white pawn at d4. Black went for counterplay against white's a-pawn and the game turned tactical as white gave up the pawn plus a rook and og for a kingside attack.



31.--- Nxa4 32.Qh5 Rf8 33.Be8 Nxb2 34.Bxf7+ Kh7 35.Qg6+ Kh8 36.Rxa5 Qxa5 – and now the position with an extra rook for black would have been highly unclear if white had retreated his queen and opened the g6 square for his knight. Instead 37.Nd7? Qe1+ 38.Kh2 Qe4 forced off the queens and soon won the endgame for black.

Finally, the board 50 duel between **Håvard Eriksen Bech (1951)** and **WCM Sachi Jain (1992)** was a Queen's Gambit in which the dark-squared white bishop first was seen at f4 and then at d6. White first had a slight pressure, but eager to avoid a repetition he at move 20 dubiously sacrificed a pawn at g4. Following this black left a repetition, but soon accepted a queen exchange leading to a rooks and minor piece endgame in which white despite black's extra pawn at h4 was perfectly fine. Jain played the double-edged endgame with two rooks, knight and six pawns against two rooks, bishop and five pawns better than Bech for the next two hours, and anyway had the better position when white at move 51 blundered his key pawn at e3. Black following this came two sound pawns up, and well ahead on the clock she after 66 moves had landed safely in a won rook endgame

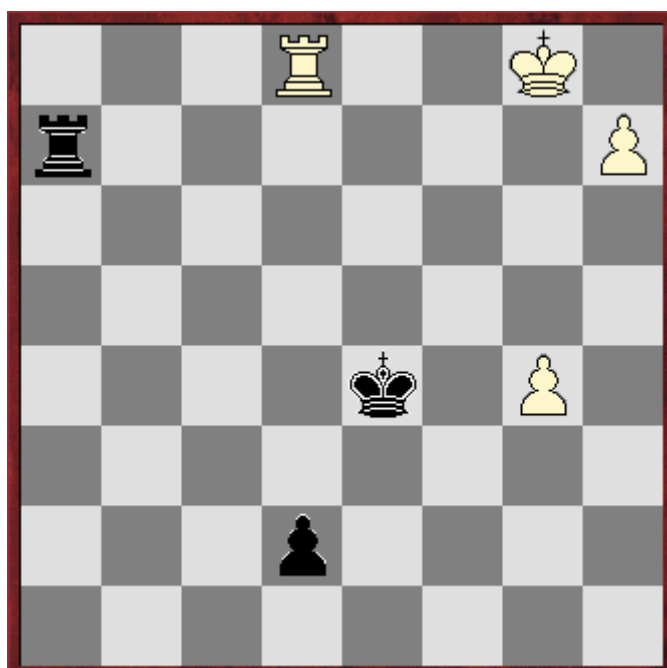
Open Group

In **the Open**, 20 year old **Amund Pihl Strand (1860)** had a long and tough test as white in a balanced English game against veteran **Karim Ali (1855)**.

Strand in the fifth hour succeeded in winning a pawn and reaching a won rook endgame with two against one pawn. The final moves were entertaining and a bit creative, although white had the win under control:



Strand vs Ali



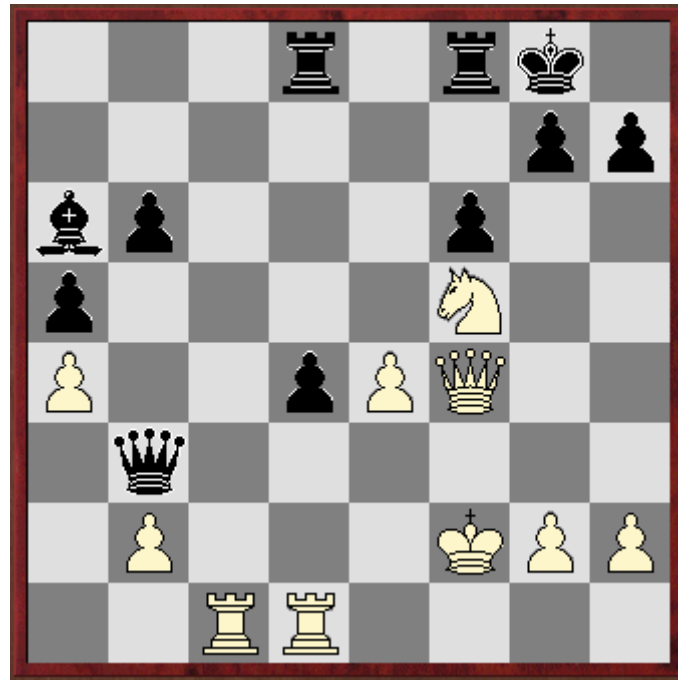
61.--- Ra8 62.Rxa8 d1Q 63.h8Q Qd5+ 64.Kh7 Qb7+ 65.Kg6 Qc6+ 66.Kh5 Qc5+ 67.g5 Qb6 1-0

Second board between **Andreas Skrede Hausken (1963)** and **Benjamin Halvorsen (1848)** was another long rook endgame with an extra pawn for white, in the end also leading to a win.

Third board duel between **Kazim Yilmaz (1805)** and **Sigurd Kittilsen (1910)** on the other hand was a materially balanced rook endgame very soon leading to a draw.

Fourth board between **August Minth Brattgjerd (1689)** and **Dag Arild Andersen (1899)** did not reach the rook endgame, as Andersen resigned a little early when losing a second pawn with queen and rooks left on each side. 12 year old Brattgjerd has done very well and qualifies as the young surprise man so far.

Fifth board was something completely different, as **Morten Rolstad (1879)** before 30 moves won by a nice attack against too-fast-playing **Tim Spanton (1876)**.



27.Rc7!? and now 27.--- Rf7 would have left the outcome open, while 27.--- g5?? 28.Rg7+ Kh8 29.Qc7 was 1-0. Black in the final position was 45 minutes ahead on the clock, but about to be mated on the board.

Indian FIDE instructor **Reddy Sushrutha (1707)** following a generous queen exchange reached a won endgame in a long and tight battle as black against Ukrainian veteran **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1789)** on the sixth board.

12 year old **Christine Nordahl (1673)** as black against **Ida Lahlum (1755)** took over the initiative, picked up an exchange and won safely in the endgame on the seventh board. Competition for the best woman prize here remains very open.

The lower boards today had some dramatic moments. 13 year old **Sebastian Sigvaldsen (1457)** forgot the clock and bitterly lost on time at move 33, from a better position as white against **Catherine Jørgensen (1608)**.

The game between 19 year old **Steinar Diseth Skogholt (1611)** and 59 year old **Jan Ove Odden (1723)** later became a six hours marathon in which white after nearly 90 moves successfully demonstrated a winning attack with queen against two bishops and a pawn.

20 year old Kristiansund player **Amund Pihl Strand** following this still has a full point lead on his Aalesund competitor **Andreas Skrede Hausken**. Their internal meeting on the first board in round 7, with Skrede as white, obviously will be extremely important for the first prize fight here.

Reddy Sushrutha and **August Minh Brattgjerd** are sharing the third place at 4,5/6 and will play each other on the second board in an also very important round 7 game.

More pictures from the Open:



Photos by Tom Eriksen and Anniken Vestby