

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2025

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 3



### GM Group

Round 3 became another hard-fought and highly entertaining one, in which the top three boards all had a winner. Fourth rated Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal in the sixth hour used his chance to turn and win a turbulent battle as black against English IM Jonah B. Willow. Around the same time fifth rated GM Rinat Jumabayev succeeded in squeezing an apparently drawish minor piece endgame against IM Arystanbek Urazayev, in a hard-fought Kazakhstani duel on the second board. Two hours earlier GM Raja Rithvik R won a bit more controlled as black against Norwegian surprise FM Sondre Melaa, although this too was an exciting game.

The next three boards all were drawn, but sixth board duel between IM Balázs Csonka and GM Diptayan Ghosh was the only safe and short draw seen in this GM group today. Fourth board duel between IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy and IM Linus Johansson was a tense positional five-hour battle. Fifth board lasted six hours and had a dramatic finish, as 13 year Scottish FM Rishi Vijayakumar after 83 moves could save a difficult queen endgame by claiming a draw by threefold repetition against top rated GM Gergely Kántor!

Seventh board was a long game with a surprising winner, as IM Moksh Doshi decided a rather chaotic attacking game by an elegant king march as black against GM Gopal Narayanan. Board eight and nine saw more expected white wins from GM Denis Makhnev and GM Ameet Ghasi, while FM Eivind Grunt Kreken's attacking win against IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen on board ten qualifies as a notable surprise.

Another surprising result from a young IM candidate was 16 year old CM Indy Southcott-Moyers drawing a turbulent attacking game against GM Erik Blomqvist. The lower boards today had many exciting games, but in the end still no sensational outcome.

First place at 3,0/3 following this is shared between GM Urkedal, GM Jumabayev and GM Raja, while the bigger group half a point behind includes GM Makhnev, GM Ghasi, IM Kvaløy, IM Johansson, IM Dokshi, FM Kreken and FM Vijayakumar. Next round Urkedal will get the white pieces against Jumabayev on the first board, while Raja is white against Makhnev on the second board.

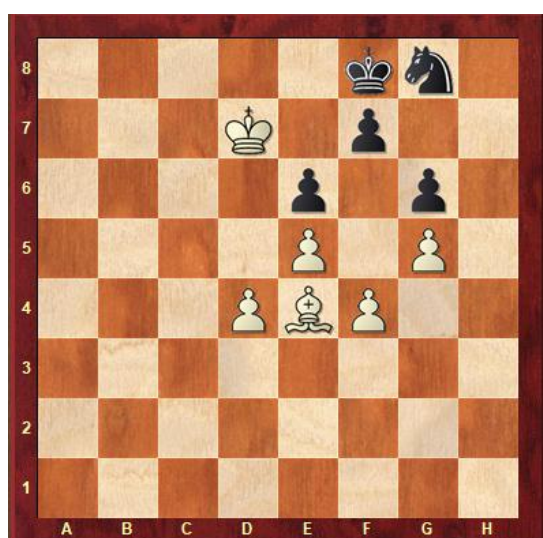
On today's first board, **IM Jonah B. Willow (2471)** as white in a Ruy Lopez against **GM Frode Urkedal (2550)** went for a delayed exchange line with 6.Bxc6. This in accordance with very long traditions left white with a slightly better pawn structure and black with a pair of bishops. White obviously had the better preparation and came ahead on the clock. As black later redirected his knight to f4, white exchanged it for a bishop and later gave up his pawn at d3 to eliminate the black f4-pawn. Black's pair of bishops combined with the weakened white kingside for a while gave him an advantage, although the position remained extremely complicated. 39.--- Rb6? during mutual time pressure was a positional blunder, as white had a truly dangerous h-file attack coming up after 40.f5! Qd6 41.Rh1. However 43.f6? was a blunder from white, as black after 43.--- Rb2! had counterplay just in time to survive – while 43.Qh3! Bg7 44.Qh7+ Kf8 45.f6 would have been close to winning.

Urkedal following this could save his king by giving up the bishop at g7. A tense fight followed in the fifth hour as white had a piece more, but now had the less secure king. The decisive moments of this very exciting game came well into the sixth hour, when black had three minutes and white less than one minute left on the clock:



60.Kg3 Ra3+ 61.Kh2 Rf3 62.Rg2 would have been highly unclear. Instead 60.Kh2? was a time trouble blunder, and black decided with 60.--- Qd2! 61.Qc8+ Kxg7 62.Rg2 Rh4+?! (62.--- Qf4+! Kh1 Ra1+ 64.Rg1 Qf3 with mate in a few moves) 63.Nh3 Qf4+ 64.Rg3 Qxe5 65.Qxb7? Rg4! 66.Qf3 Qxg3+ 67.Qxg3 Rxg3 68.Kxg3 a4 0-1

This very international tournament yesterday had a Hungarian duel on the first board, and today a Kazakhstani duel on the second board. **GM Rinat Jumabayev (2549)** as white against **IM Arystanbek Urazaeyv (2467)** went for a solid Catalan set up. Black in reply chose a rather unusual line in which black plays 6... a5?! and then takes the pawn at c4. Not unpredictably, white soon won back the pawn with some advantage. Black gave up another pawn to force further exchanges, and after 35 moves he tried to hide in an apparently drawish minor piece endgame with knight and four pawns against bishop and five pawns. The defence here turned out to be much more difficult than first expected, and black spent much time without finding the best defensive plan. The key for white's winning plans was first to activate the king and then to sacrifice the bishop for two pawns in the right moment. Jumabayev instructively demonstrated how to do it:



55.Bxg6! fxg6  
 56.Kxe6 Ne7  
 57.d5 Nf5  
 58.d6 Ng7+  
 59.Kf6 Nh5+  
 60.Kxg6 Nxf4+  
 61.Kf5 Nh5  
 62.g6 Ng7+  
 63.Kg5 Ke8  
 64.Kh6  
 1-0



**FM Sondre Melaa (2344)** arrived a few minute delayed for his board three white game against **Raja Rithvik R (2538)**, but both players later moved fast for the first 15 moves. The opening was a Reti-like English, leading to a reversed Benoni with about equal chances. The GM creatively sacrificed a pawn with 18.--- e4!?, with promising compensation due to his passed d-pawn and pressure against white's pawns. White still had fair chances, but chose the wrong plan when he was about to give back the pawn:



28.Nxf6+ was the given move her, and 28.--- gxf6 29.g4! (to stop 29.--- Bh3# and open the g3 square for white's king) Bxc4 30.Rb2 still would have offered white chances. Instead the game went 28.h4? Qxc4 29.Nxf6+ gxf6 30.Rd3 Qxb5 31.g4 Bxc4 32.Rxd4 Bf1+ 0-1



**Kvaløy vs Johansson**

The Scandinavian GM-candidate duel between **IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2481)** and **IM Linus Johansson (2392)** also started up with a Reti-like English opening, although this one was much more open. White's double fianchetto gave him at best a slight edge. Following a steam of sound exchanges, white due to his queenside pawn majority held a slight edge in the double minor-piece endgame. Black defended well and white failed to find any plan for

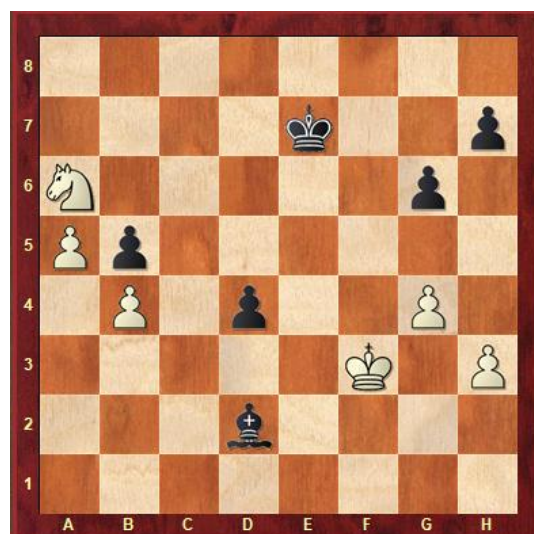
advancing the passed a4-pawn. The minor piece endgame after the first time control following this was very drawish, and the players finally agreed to share the point after 55 moves.



**GM Gergely Kántor (2578)** and **FM Rishi Vijayakumar (2317)** started up with the greatest speed today: Ten minutes after starting the clocks, this game had reached move 18. The opening was a half-open Ruy Lopez. 17.--- d5?! might have been dubious although black spent less than a minute and appeared to be in some kind of preperation. Black spent 40 minutes for his next move, but still ran into trouble:



18.--- Qd6? 19.Bf4?! Rbd8? and now 20.Rxe4! dxe4 21.Bxf7+ Rxf7 22.Nxf7 Qxf4 23.Nxd8 was winning for white! The game instead continued 20.f3? Qf6 21.Be3 Ng3 22.Rxc7 and white had won back the pawn with a positional advantage. 13 year old Rishi however fought on bravely and got the chance needed to balance the chances. The minor piece endgame with knight and five pawns versus bishop and five pawns after 35 moves was drawish, although black still had to be more careful. Black's position was lost for a few moves following a mistake at move 40, although white in turn again failed to use his chance:



44.Ke2! Bc3 45.Nc7! Kd7 46.Nd5 now was practically winning.

The game instead went 44.Ke4? Kd6 45.Kxd4 Be1, after which white despite his extra pawn had a hard time winning.

The GM of course continued playing and after 64 moves had reached an endgame with queen and a pawn at h5 against queen. This was close to winning with the black king at a8, although white's king still had a hard time escaping the checks. 74.h7? was a mistake, but finding the correct moves here with a few minutes left on the clock was extremely difficult for any human chess player.

The position jumped back and forth between a win for white and a draw several times in the sixth hour. It finally landed on a draw, as white at move 83 stumbled into a threefold repetition. 13 year old Rishi efficiently used his chance to claim a draw, and following six tense hours achieved his first ever draw against a 2500-player – the day after his first ever win against a GM. Kántor was understandably tired and frustrated not to win this game, and immediately requested a walk over draw for round 4. Vijayakumar on the other hand appeared motivated to play much more chess soon.



**Kántor vs Vijayakumar**



**Csonka vs Ghosh**

**IM Balázs Csonka (2459)** following yesterday's white draw again top rated Kántor today got white against second rated **GM Diptayan Ghosh (2573)**. The opening was a Classical Nimzo-Indian in which black exchanged his dark-squared bishop for a knight at c3, after which white exchanged his dark-squared bishop for a knight at f6. White after 11 moves had a slight edge due to his better bishop, although black's position was very solid. Draw was agreed in a very

balanced position after 14 moves. Csonka is hunting a GM norm and two draws against top rated GMs might qualify as a promising start, even though he burned two white games for these draws.

Seventh board today saw an Indian duel between **GM Gopal Narayanan (2556)** and **IM Moksh Doshi (2369)**.

Players entered a traditional closed Ruy Lopez duel, which suddenly turned tactical as white went for 11.d4 and black immediately replied with 11...d5. It is well known from many earlier games, but still a complex line if you do not remember the lines. Gopal spent much time, but first found his way to a positional plus.

Following 23.e6!? white apparently had a strong initiative, but black found enough counterplay to balance the chances. During mutual time pressure this position was difficult to handle, and the advantage jumped back and forth several times. The decisive mistake came at move 47 – after Gopal had spent 15 of his remaining 19 minutes:



**Gopal vs Moksh**



47.h4! Bg7 48.Qg8 Kxg6 49.Kh1 Rf7 was critical, and could have ended with a repetition of checks after 50.Rg1+ Kf6 51.Qd8+ Ke6 52.Qd5+ Ke7 etc. Instead black got the chance to decide by an airy king march: 47.Qf7+? Kg5 48.Qh7 Bd6 49.h4+ Kf4 50.Qd7?! Kg3 51.Qxd6+ Kh3 and 0-1 as white cannot stop the threat of Qg2 mate. Gopal also felt tired and also requested a walk over draw for next round following this long and cold shower.





**Makhnev vs Mitusov**

The game between **GM Denis Makhnev (2537)** and **IM Semen Mitusov (2459)** was the slow starter among the top boards today. Both players soon started to think following a rare Zukertort opening. White demonstrated the better understanding here and much due to his strong knight on e5 kept an initiative. Black's try to complicate by an exchange sacrifice succeeded eventually, as white sacrificed back the exchange in the wrong way.

Chances according to the computers were close to equal after 34 moves. White however still had the easier position with queen, rook, two bishops and five pawns against queen, rook, bishop, knight and five pawns – and eight minutes against less than one minute on the clock. Mitusov understandably failed to see the dangers and stumbled into a decisive pin:



35.--- Bd4? 36.Bxe6 fxe6 37.Rd1! Qd5 38.Rd2! e5 39.fxe5 1-0



English **GM Ameet Ghasi (2502)** and Norwegian **FM Gunnar Lund (2341)** in the meantime had started up with a closed Catalan, in which both players spent much time early. Black used his chance more or less to transpose into a Dutch Stonewall with 7.--- Ne4 and 8.--- f5. Ghasi continued to spend much time, but found an interesting possibility – sacrificing the pawn at d4 to open the position for his bishops. Practically this won a jackpot. White got a strong initiative for the pawn, and reached a safe advantage as black after 22 moves had given back the pawn. White a few moves later had all the best pieces, and black anyway was about to lose a piece for dubious compensation when he blundered something bigger:



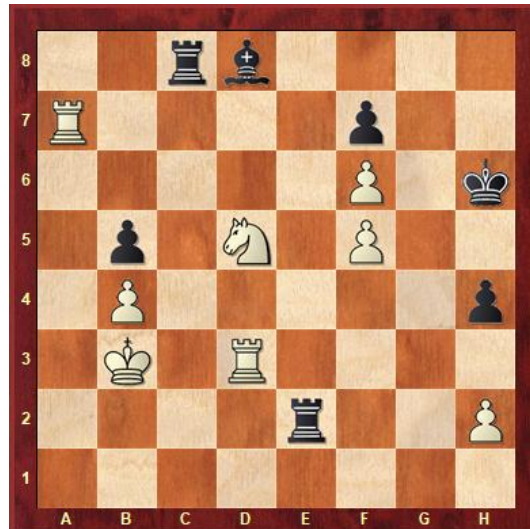
30.--- Qg6? 31.Rd6 Rxe7? 32.Rf8+ 1-0



**Kreken vs Kaasen**

The young Norwegian duel between **FM Eivind Grunt Kreken (2326)** and **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2472)** saw a complex Sicilian Richter-Rauzer opening line, in which white castled long while black kept his king undeclared at e8. Black and his pair of bishops apparently did fine after exchanging the queens at move 16, although the position was positionally messy.

A tense struggle followed for the next two hours. After 40 moves white was a pawn up, although black's active rooks made life difficult for his king.



After 41.--- Rcc2! it would have been very difficult for white to avoid a draw.

Instead 41.--- Rxh2? asked for too much and lost after 42.Rxf7 Rf2 43.Ne3 Kg5 44.Rf8 h3 45.Rd4! Rb2+ 46.Kxb2 Bxf6 47.Rxf6 Kxf6 48.Rh4 1-0 Kaasen is more or less out of the run for his third GM norm following this, while Kreken has had a promising start on the run for a second IM norm.

**IM Svyatoslav Bazakutsa (2474)** as white in a Queen's Gambit against **FM Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2283)** went for an exchange line with 5.Bf4. The dark-squared bishops immediately were exchanged. White obviously had the better preparation here, as black lagged half an hour behind on the clock before move 10. Black on the board came up with enough counterplay to balance the chances in the middle game. White still kept the pressure and after the first time control was a pawn up with queen, rook, knight and five pawns against queen, rook, bishop and four pawns. Fiskaaen again created enough counterplay, and so the players in the sixth hour had to handle a tense endgame race with 1-2 minutes left on the clock. Both the young lions handled the situation very well, hence a draw in the end came well deserved for both of them.



64.--- g2 65.Rg3+ Rg4 66.Rxg4+ Bxg4 67.a7 g1Q 68.a8Q Qc1+ 69.Kb3 Qb1+ 70.Kc3 Qe1+ 71.Kb3 Bd1+ 72.Ka3 Qc3+ 73.Ka2 Qc4+ 74.Ka3 Qc1+ and black found nothing better than a repetition of checks. Indeed there was nothing better and remarkably the position was drawn all the way in the endgame.



**Westrum vs Kulaots**

**CM Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2193)** and **GM Kaido Kulaots (2510)** made a safe Sicilian start with 3.Bb5+.

White after exchanging the light-squared bishops at d7 kept a slight space advantage due to his pawns at c4 and e4, while black had a flexible Sicilian set up with pawns at d6 and e6. 49 year old Kulaots spent much time here, but gradually improved the position of his pieces and took over the initiative by sacrificing a pawn.

With less than two minutes left on the clock, the GM efficiently used his chance when the blunder came:



White obviously would have to give back the pawn at d4 soon, but still could have fair drawing chances if saving his first rank with 28.Rdb1! Instead 28.Rb3? allowed a classical finish: 28.--- Ng4! 29.Qf3 Rcx d4 30.Rxd4 Qxd4+ 31.Kh1 Nf2+ 32.Kg1 Ne4+! 33.Kh1 Nd2 34.Qg3 Nxb3 35.axb3 Qxc3 36.Qxc3 Rd1+ 0-1





**Gandrud vs Rozentalis**

Norwegian **FM Vegard Koi Gandrud (2273)** met his third GM in three rounds, now as white against Lithuanian veteran **GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2481)**. White took a safe road with a fianchetto set up and first came slightly better. The GM however made the deeper evaluation when exchanging off white's knight at e5: After 16.fxe5 with had a space advantage due to his pawns at c5 and e5, but black still was slightly better since white struggled to find active squares for

his bishops in this rather locked position. The GM apparently had a strong attack in the middle game, although white succeeded in exchanging queens and reach a drawish endgame with rook, two bishops and five pawns against rook, bishop, knight and five pawns. White used his first chance to exchange the light-squared bishop for black's knight, leaving a rook and opposite-coloured bishop endgame which was considered a very likely draw. Black however now was «clearly slightly better», and opposite-coloured bishops much less guarantee a draw with additional rooks on the board. Rozentalis played on and instructively increased the pressure on the board and clock. After 53 moves black had created a passed e-pawn, which reached e2 with decisive effect at move 70.



**Southcott-Moyers vs Blomqvist**

Meanwhile **CM Indy Southcott-Moyers (2227)** and **GM Erik Blomqvist (2475)** tested out a London system in which black could play 5.--- Nh5 and 6.--- Nxf4. Black later had a pair of bishops plus the better pawn structure, but white's active knights just about balanced the chances after 15 moves. Southcott-Moyers here made the better evaluation when entering tactical complications at move 23: Following tactical

exchanges black eventually came out with a pawn more, but white still had the better chances due to his much safer king. White later had a few chances to win, the last one during mutual time pressure before move 40:



38.--- Nc4? and now the simple 39.Rc1! would have created a troublesome pin – one possible line is 39.--- Qe7 40.h4! Nd6 41.Qf4+ Kg7 42.Rxc7 Qxc7 43.Qxd4 Kh6 44.Qf4+ with a winning advantage. The game instead finished with an airy repetition of checks after 39.Bxc4? Qxc4 40.Qxf3 d3 41.Qf8+ Kh5 42.Qf3+ Kh6 43.Qf8+ etc. Draw against a GM despite some wasted chances of course was a great result and experience for 16-year-old Indy.



Hillarp vs Hedman

The Swedish duel between **GM Tiger Hillarp (2462)** and **IM Erik Hedman (2276)** started up with a very Reti-like Zukertort opening, in which black established a space advantage by an early e5. After 16 moves black had succeeded in exchanging white's light-squared fianchetto bishop and was perfectly fine. Hedman however chose the wrong plan afterwards, allowing the still creative Tiger gradually to open the kingside files against black's king.

White's attack was considered winning around move 30, although black succeeded in keeping the game going for 15 moves more.



**Tørfoss vs Dotzer**

The duel between Norwegian **Sivert Schanche Tørfoss (2141)** and Austrian **IM Lukas Dotzer (2453)**, both 15 years old, made a slightly original start with 1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nd7 3.d4 Nb6 4.Bg2 Bf5. Black exchanged a pawn and a knight at c4, and white later had a little more space due to his pawn at d4. Black had equal chances with sound squares for all his minor pieces, and after 14 moves he was more than half an hour ahead on the board. A tense

middle game struggle followed, as white succeeded in weakening black's kingside with some attacking chances. White here had less than one minute on the clock after 24 moves. As black later also spent much time, it came down to an exciting time trouble duel in a double-edged attacking position with opposite-coloured bishops. Black had won the white pawn at d4, but the outcome still was open with three moves left to the time control:



38.Re4? Bxf2+! 39.Kg2! and now black should have played 39.--- Rxd1! as 39.--- Rd2?! would have been highly unclear after 40.Rxd2! Rxd2 41.Qg4+ Qg6 42.Qc8+ Kg7 43.Rg4. The game instead continued 40.Rg4+? Kf8 41.Rh4 Qe3 42.Rxd2 Rxd2 43.Qxe3 Bxe3+ 44.Kf3 Rxc2 with an easy win for black in the rook endgame.





**Zhou vs Østensen**

English **IM Yang-Fan Zhou (2418)** and Norwegian **FM Nicolai Østensen (2260)** discussed an unorthodox Italian line in which black develops his kingside with h6-g5-Bg7, followed by short castling and g4. Black here failed to come up with any real kingside attack, and white held a pleasant positional edge after exchanging one set of knights plus the light-squared bishops. Black went for f5 with some counterplay on the kingside, but white in the

meantime picked up pawns on the queenside and proved able to defend the kingside. During mutual time pressure before move 40, the IM successfully exchanged it down to an easily won rook endgame with two extra pawns.

**WFM Valentina Verbin (2113)** and **GM Normunds Miezis (2409)** went for a Sicilian Kan duel in which white castled long and black short. Dangers to the kings disappeared with the queens at move 13, and the dark-squared bishops already had been exchanged. White first had a slight initiative, but one careless move destroyed it all:



18.Bd3?? Rd8 19.Rd1 Rxd4 20.Bh7+ N8xh7 21.Rxd4 and black had a winning position with two minor pieces for a rook. The GM later took his time, but won the endgame in a very convincing way.

**IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2398)** and **Louis Khoo-Thwe (2118)** investigated a rather lively Italian opening, in which black put a knight on the e4 square and went for tactical counterplay against the white pawns at e5 and d4.



The game now went 14.f3 Nxd4!? 14.fxe4?! dxe4 with interesting compensation for the knight. White a few moves later forced himself to give up the queen. The remaining position with two rooks, two bishops, two knights and three pawns against queen, two rooks, bishop and six pawns (!) still was difficult to handle for both players. Vestby-Ellingsen fought on well, but still had a difficult position with half a minute against half an hour on the clock until his opponent got his queen trapped in the middle of the board:

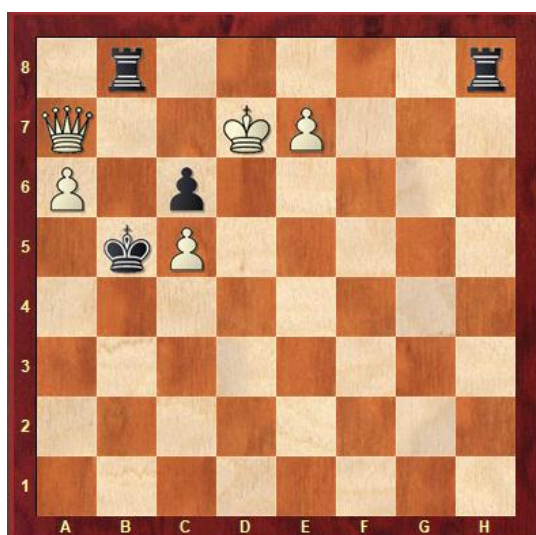


30.--- Re8?? 31.Rf5! Qxd4+ 32.Bxd4 Rxd4 and the IM (much) later won with his extra piece in the endgame.

Indian **IM Aradhya Garg (2387)** as white against Norwegian **CM Andreas Skotheim (2229)** went for a positional Torre Attack with 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bg5 h6 4.Bxf6 Qxf6 5.e4. Black's pair of bishop approximately balanced white's space advantage. Exchanging the dark-squared bishop for a knight with 10.--- Bxe5? was a positional mistake and soon ran into tactical problems:



11.dxe5 Qb4+ 12.Nc3 Qxb2 13.Rh3! g4 14.Bb5+ Bd7 16.Rd3! Bxb5 17.Rb1 Qxb1 18.Qxb1 Bc6 with a decisive advantage for white. Skotheim true to his nature fought on stubbornly, and managed to reach a endgame with two rooks against queen. White due to his two passed pawns still had excellent practical chances. Garg in the end elegantly overcame black's apparently strong first rank defence:



71.Qxb8+! Rxb8 72.a7 Rb7+ 73.Kd6 Rxa7 74.e8Q 1-0



**Per Fredrik Holand (2070)** and **FM Jacob Templen Grave (2337)** started up with 1.c4 e6, but soon transposed into a closed Catalan. Exchanging pawns at d5 here gave white less than nothing and black came better after activating his light-squared bishop via a6 to e2. White's space advantage in this illustrating case was a problem for him: The kingside was closed with black's king in a very safe place at g7, while black's pieces from the queenside could move in behind white's pawns and create an attack against the more open white king at h2. Holand following this anyway was a pawn down with a lost position when he before the first time control gave up a knight and resigned.

The teenager duel between **FM Adharsh K (2317)** and **Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (2020)** saw a Hyper-accelerated Sicilian Dragon transposing into a Maroczy Bind under favorable circumstances for white. White here kept an initiative as black wasted time with a Qd8-Qb6-Qd8 maneuver. Adharsh instructively developed his initiative into a direct attack against the black king and after 32 moves had won decisive material.

**FM Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2305)** and **Sigurd Kittilsen (2010)** investigated a Sicilian Najdorf line in which white castled short, while black kept his king undeclared at e8. This in a rather open position was risky for black, and white came much better as black after 14.Nd5 gave up his light-squared bishop for the knight. White after exchanging queens had a close to winning advantage due to his pair of bishops, but then became too eager to win a piece:



Now 18.Bxb7! would have won a pawn with a close to winning position, as 18.--- Nxc2? 19.Rxd8+ Kxd8 20.Rc1 Nxe3 21.Rc8+ runs bankrupt. Instead 18.Be4?! 0-0 19.c3? Bxc3 20.bxc3 Ne2+ 21.Kg2 Rxd1 22.Rxd1 Nxc3 23.Bc2 Nxd1 24.Bxd1 left a double-edged position with two bishops and four pawns against rook and six pawns. Black's pawn majority on the queenside gave him the better practical chances in this endgame.

White's king march plan in the fourth hour here was misunderstood, hence black after the first time control had a win within reach:



Now 44.--- Rf6! > 45.Kb5? Rxc6 or 45.Bxg5 Re6! 46.Kc7 Re2 is very promising. The game instead was suddenly drawn after 44.--- Rb8+? 45.Kc7.

A Norwegian teenage duel between **CM Nikolay Den Roover (2004)** and **FM Sergey Eliseev (2226)** saw a King's Indian Attack in which white had the pair of bishops. Black had the more active pieces and was slightly better after 17 moves. Inviting a queen exchange with 18.Bg5? here more or less blundered, as black had a winning initiative after 18.--- Qxd1 19.Nxd1 Nd4! Eliseev in an inspired mood soon found a tactical way forward:



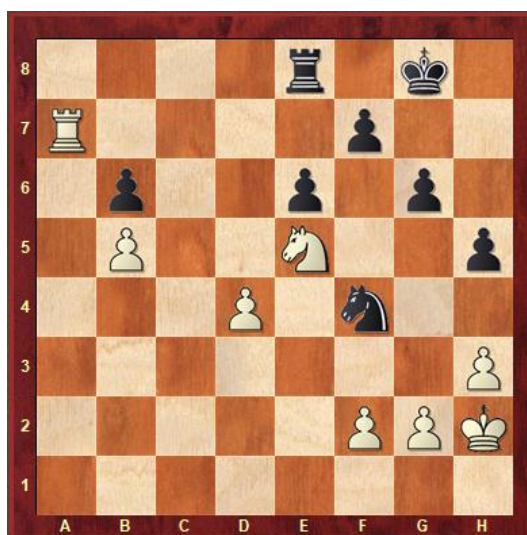
22.--- h6! 23.Bf4 g5 24.Ne3 Nxf2! 25.Kxf2 gxf4 26.gxf4 Rfd8 27.Rg1?! Rd2+ 28.Kf3 Nd4+ 29.Kg4 Ne2 and black soon won.



**Pang vs Simonsen**

10 year old **FM Ethan Pang (2257)** and 14 year old **David M. Simonsen (2034)** investigated a rare Queen's Pawn opening in which black first demonstrated the better understanding. Black got the time needed for him to exchange white's light-squared bishop with 12.--- Nb4 and 13.--- Nxd3. Following this black could exchange his own light-squared bishop for a white knight and establish pleasant pressure against white's isolated pawn at

d4. White soon came up with counterplay and had the initiative as the young lions after 30 moves reached an interesting rook and minor piece endgame:



31.--- f6! 32.Nc4 Rb8 now should be enough for a draw. Instead 31.--- Rf8? was too passive and gave white a winning advantage after 32.Nd7 Rd8 33.Nxb6 Ne2. Now 34.Na4! Nxd4 35.b6 would have been very difficult for black. The game instead continued 34.Nd7? Nxd4 35.b6 Nb5 36.Rb7 Nd6 37.Rc7 Nb5 and black proved (barely) able to save the draw.





**Brattgjerd vs Kaewpitakkun**

Another Norwegian teenage duel between **Isak Vinh Brattgjerd (2202)** and **Pantham Kaewpitakkun (2026)** saw a closed Ruy Lopez gradually opening. Following this black's pair of bishops gave him an advantage around move 23. Black soon afterwards went for a classical exchange sacrifice with 31.--- Rd4?!, but had no good plan when white did not take the rook. Following this the tide turned towards black's king, and white after the first time control demonstrated a crushing attack against the black king at h6.



**Gåsland vs Andersen**

**Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1994)** and **Morten Andersen (2200)** discussed a symmetrical English which soon became everything but symmetrical. Black succeeded in exchanging his knight for the dark-squared white bishop at e3 and then weakened white's pawn structure further by giving up his fianchetto bishop at g7 for a knight at c3. After 18 moves white following this had a nightmare structure with two isolated c-pawns and two isolated

e-pawns. The position still was highly unclear as white had chances for a direct attack on the weakened dark kingside squares. Andersen following a clever defence got the help needed to reach a rook and minor piece endgame in which his structural advantage soon won two pawns and the game.

The duel between 13-year-olds **Victor Lilliehöök (1993)** and **IM Eshaan Hebbar (2175)** made a fresh start with a Scotch opening, in which white bravely castled long and went for a kingside pawn storm. Black's plan with 14...Bxd4? 15.Nxd4 b5? here was too loose, as white within a few moves won the black pawns at c6 and b5 with an ongoing attack. Lilliehöök played a great game today and in the final position after 26 moves was one piece and two pawns up – still with the more dangerous attack.



**Lilliehöök vs Hebbar**

**Lars Tormod Haugen (1988)** and **Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (2167)** meanwhile had a tense positional duel in the good old Sveshnikov line of the Sicilian. White here kept a lasting edge, as his strong d5 outpost and pressure against the backward pawn at d6 was more important than black's pair of bishops. Black defended by sound moves and reached a balanced rooks and minor piece endgame after exchanging the queens and light-squared bishops. Black was closer to winning chances in the endgame, but Haugen defended very well and by active means. A draw was agreed as the players after 48 moves were about to run out of pieces.



**Haugen vs Skaar**

The young Norwegian duel between **Nikolai Olsen Wernberg (1893)** and **Eirik Berget (2041)** saw a King's Indian Attack transposing into some close relative of a closed Catalan, in which black had his bishop at d6 and his knight at c6. White exchanged the bishop for a knight with 11.Nb5 and 12.Nxd6, and following this had the pair of bishops plus a slightly better structure. 16.e4?! however here was a misunderstood plan, helping black to exchange one of his isolated d-pawns. Following this the players after 25 moves had reached a balanced position with queen, rook, bishop and six pawns against queen, rook, knight and six pawns. Black had the easier position to play, with some chances for a kingside attack after 27.--- Ne4. Black later missed a very nice combination, but still won the game:



Both players overlooked 30.--- Rxf2+! 31.Rxf2 Qxh3+ 32.Kg1 Qh1+! 33.Kxh1 Nxf2+ and 34.--- Nxd3 with a totally won minor piece endgame. The game instead continued 30.--- Rg6? 31.Bf4?! Qf5 and now white tried to defend tricky, but instead fooled himself efficiently, with 32.Rd2?? Qxf4! 0-1





**Hausken vs Øksendal**

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (2002)** and **FM Martin Øksendal (2250)** entered a rather unusual Sicilian Alapin line with 1.e4 c5 2.c3 e5 3.d4. Black for some moves later hung on an extra pawn at d4, and chances were about balanced as white after 18 moves had won back the pawn. White had a slight pressure after exchanging the light-squared bishops on favourable terms with 20.Bxe6, as black had some worries for his pawns at d6 and e6. The tide however turned in favour of black as he

was allowed 22.--- d5! and 23.--- d4 with a strong initiative. Black in turned invited white back into the ring by allowing an interesting exchange sacrifice. White after 30 moves apparently had the better practical chances, as he had 75 minutes against seven minutes in a very unclear position. His plan with 31.Qb3? and 32.Ng5? however was a serious misunderstanding. Only two moves later white suddenly resigned, as his position was about to collapse with the key pawn at e4.

**Peder Marcus Aamodt (2242)** versus **Benjamin Halvorsen (1966)** was an Open Catalan duel in which chances after 12 moves were approximately balanced. Ng5 is a rather common tactical maneuver in these positions, but here it did not work out too well due to a rather uncommon counter hit:



16.Ng5? Qxg5 17.Bxb7 Rc7 18.Bg2 Qxe3! 19.fxe3 Bxe3+ 20.Kf1 Rxc2 21.Rxd7 Rfc8 with an extra pawn for black! The opposite-coloured bishops still made it very difficult for black to create winning chances, and a draw was agreed in a dead bishop endgame after 46 moves.

**CM Ashwath Kaushik (1958)** and **William Alexander Olsen (2188)** discussed a Sicilian Kalashnikov opening, in which tactical exchanges gave white a pawn more and a pair of bishops. Computers first gave white an advantage, but black's knight at d4 was highly disturbing as white after 18 moves still had a king at e1, a bishop at f1 and a rook at h1. Black found a good plan to open the kingside while white failed to find any developing plan, and consequently black soon had a crushing attack:



22.--- f5! 23.exf5? Qb4+ 24.Bd2? Qb7! 25.Be2 Bxf5 26.Qh3 Re4 27.Qh5+ Bg6 0-1

Finally, board 34 between **Daniel Arvola (2088)** and **Amund Pihl Strand (1914)** saw the rare Scandinavian opening. White had the pair of bishops advantage before move 10, and castled long to start a pawn storm on the kingside. Black's king escaped the immediate dangers by castling long, and reached about balanced chances as he after 20 moves had exchanged all minor pieces except opposite-coloured bishops. 26.--- e5?! however was a positional mistake, as white after 27.d5! established a promising space advantage. Black following this anyway was losing a pawn when he short of time blundered it all away:



34.--- e4?  
35.f6! Ree8  
36.fxg7! exf3  
37.gxf8Q  
1-0

# Open Group

The **Open** had another hard-fought round, in which seven out of the top eight boards in the more or less bitter end had a winner.



**Andersen vs Abrahamsson**

The board one duel between veterans **Guttorm Andersen (1842)** and **Roaul Abrahamsson (1920)** was a roughly balanced battle until the queens were exchanged at move 22. Abrahamsson then immediately chose a wrong plan and Andersen in an inspired mood dominated the rest of the game. Despite two pawns less black suddenly had chances for a draw as white forced a rook exchange to play with opposite-coloured bishops, but

white's passed pawns still decided within a few moves.

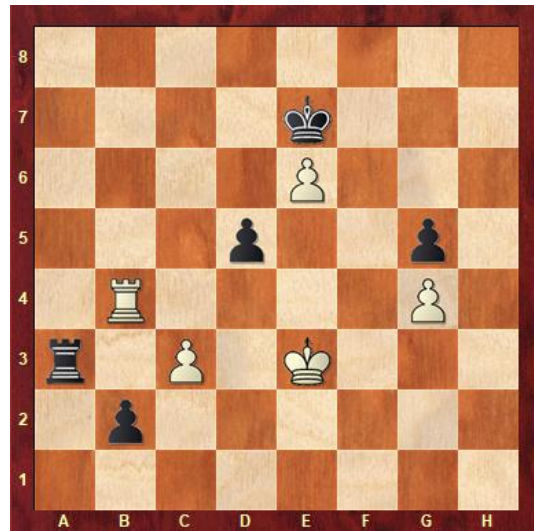
Second board duel between 12 year old **August Solbu (1887)** and 32 year old **Sondre Stai (1786)** was a tactical and tense Russian opening duel, suddenly decided by a blunder after 19 moves:



Solbu had only nine minutes left on the clock, but still should have spent more than one minute in this critical position. 19.Bxd5? Qg6 favours black, but 19.Qxd5! would have been highly unclear. The game instead continued 19.Rxe8? Bxc4+ 20.Kg1 Bxc5+ 21.Kh2 Thxe8 and black soon won.



11 year old and highly talented **Terje Kevin Lysen (1667)** made a promising start as white against 65 year old **Karim Ali (1876)** on the third board, but the tide gradually turned in favour of black. White in the sixth hour still had a draw within short reach, towards the end of a turbulent rook endgame:



69.Rxb2! Rxc3+ 70.Kd4 Rc6 71.Kxd5 Rxe6 is a rather straightforward draw. The more ambitious 69.Kd4? instead ran into 69.--- Ra4! 70.Rxa4 b1Q 71.Kxd5 Qxb5+ 0-1

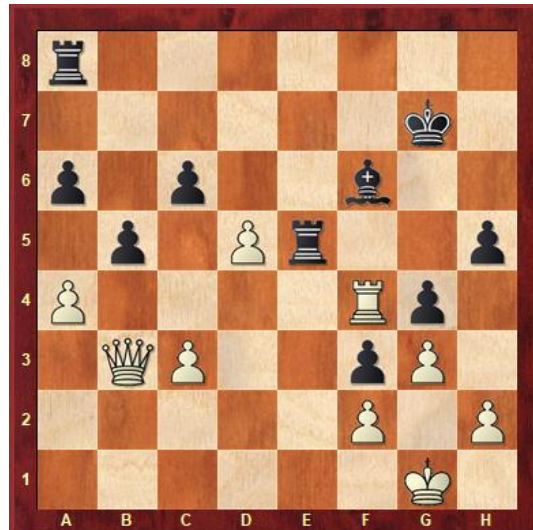


**Arulmaran vs Kopperud**

Fourth board duel between **Abishan Arulmaran (1858)** and **Vidar Kopperud (1778)** was a loose Sicilian battle which was considered winning for black around move 14, but still was drawn in a fairly balanced rooks and minor piece endgame after 28 moves.

Fifth board on the other hand saw 20 year old **Thobias Gotaas Hansen (1805)** winning a confident attacking game as white against **Kazim Yilmaz (1818)**. Yilmaz today played much too fast, as he after 38 moves had more time left than before move 1!

**Sara Gilsdottir (1738)** on board six made a promising start and had a clear advantage against second rated **Tomas Engkvist (1969)**. 14 year old Engkvist however hit back with a creative queen sacrifice, and efficiently used his chance as Gilsdottir short of time chose the wrong plan afterwards:



37.h3! is the correct defence against the threat of 37.--- Re1 mate, and would have given a very interesting position. Instead 37.Kf1? made the first rank problem much worse, and black soon won after 37.--- Rae8! 38.Qd1 Rxd5 39.Qc1 Rde5! 40.axb5 cxb5 41.c4 b4!



**Gilsdottir vs Engkvist**



**Aroven vs Kuzmenko**

First rated **Mikael Aroven (2145)** had no advantage from the opening against **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1747)**, but still came a pawn up in the queen endgame and won this convincingly.

Third rated **Isai Sivaparan (1944)** following a somewhat shaky middle game also won the endgame safely as white against **Morten Smedsrud (1699)**.

Today's surprise on the lower boards was **Marie Vatneødegård (1538)** suddenly winning a tricky queen and bishop endgame as black against **Henrik Johansson (1730)**:



30.Qd6?? hoped for Qxd6 31.exd6+ with a promising bishop endgame, but black understandably preferred 30.--- Qb7+! followed by 31.--- Bxd6.

The Open still has almost no draws, and consequently four players still have a 100 % score with 3,0/3. Andersen versus Ali and Stai versus Hansen should provide two exciting top boards for round 4.

**Photos by Tom Eriksen**