

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2025

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 6



### GM Group

The top board this round took a sensational turn, as so far so strong GM Rinat Jumabayev was crushed in 28 moves as black against English GM Ameet Ghasi. On the second board Indian GM Raja Rithvik R as black came better from the opening, but Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal defended well and escaped into a drawn endgame. India despite this got a great day on the boards: Second rated GM Diptayan Ghosh won an inspired white game against GM Tiger Hillarp on the third board, while IM Moksh Doshi prolonged his success by winning as white against IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy on the fifth board.

Fourth-board duel between IM Linus Johansson and GM Denis Makhnev became a safe and short draw, and so did the sixth-board duel between IM Lukas Dotzer and IM Jonah B. Willow. Seventh board saw a long but rather safe draw between IM Arystanbek Urazayev and IM Semen Mitusov. IM Balázs Csonka also had to settle for a draw despite a promising attack as black against GM Kaido Kulaots. Jumabaeu losing means that the fight for the top prizes now is extremely close, with six players at 4,5/6: Jumabayev due to his superior performance is leading ahead of Urkedal, Raja, Ghosh, Doshi and Ghasi. Top board pairings for round 7 will be Raja white against Ghosh, Urkedal white against Ghasi and Jumabayev white against Doshi. 11 more players, including top rated GM Gergely Kántor, can be found «half a step behind» at 4,0/6.

In short almost all the possible GM candidates scored a half point this round, and following this they lagged further behind the GM norms schedule without losing it entirely out of sight. Today's main surprise was Norwegian junior Peder Marcus Aamodt winning a great attacking game as black against GM Erik Blomqvist, but Aamodt after starting up with 0,5/3 is not title norm candidate. FM Sergey Eliseev lost ground to his norm schedule after pushing his luck too far against IM Aradhya Garg today, but Norwegian FM Eivind Grunt Kreken is around the required

performance of 2450 as he today won a tense endgame drama as black against Ukrainian IM Svyatoslav Bazakutsa. 13 year old Scottish FM Rishi Vijayakumar also hit back with a win today and has a title norm performance above 2410 after round 6. English CM Indy Soutcott-Moyers and Norwegian FM Sondre Melaa are also still in the calculations for IM norm: Indy today made a draw against a 2300-opponent, while Sondre lost to top rated Gergely Kántor.

**GM Ameet Ghasi (2502)** as white against **GM Rinat Jumabayev (2549)** made an English breakfast with 1.c4, but following 2.Nf3 and 3.d4 soon transposed into an Open Catalan. White refused a draw offer at move 11. Both players had already spent some 85 minutes. That was not for no reason, as the game had taken a very interesting course. Black had not only succeeded in keeping the extra pawn from 5.--- dxc4 – he after 15 moves had a protected passed pawn at c2!



**Ghasi vs Jumabayev**



15.--- c2?!, attacking the rook at d1, still was a mistake – as white had a powerful exchange sacrifice with 16.Rxd5! exd5 17.exd5. 17.--- Ba6? was another mistake from a crumbling cockpit, as 18.d6 Qd7 18.e6! Qxe6 19.Bc6+ Kd8 20.Bg5+ already was a close to winning attack for white. A few moves later black creatively (and/or desperately) tried to give up his queen, but it was already too late:



24.--- Qxe1+ 25.Qxe1 Be6 26.Qe3! Rb6 27.Qxc5 Kb8 28.d7! and black with only a few seconds left stopped the clock. Remarkably this was Jumabayev's s first loss at Fagernes, as his score at this venue before today's game was an amazing +14=9-0. Obviously also enjoying the venue a lot, Ameet Ghasi played one of his truly great white attacking games and is fully in the run for the top three prizes.



**Urkedal vs Rithvik**

The second board duel between Norwegian **GM Frode Urkedal (2550)** and Indian **GM Raja Rithvik (2538)** was a Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line in which white got the pair of bishops. Black however had made the better preperation, as he got a pleasant pressure partly against white's hanging center pawns at c4 and d4, and partly in the light-square diagonal a8-h1. White saw the dangers and pulled the brake, as he gave up a pawn to force an exchange of the light-

squared bishops and various other pieces. This left before 40 moves an endgame with rook, bishop and two pawns for white against rook, knight and three pawns for black. Urkedal's strategy worked out as black's backward extra pawn at a7 here made no practical difference. The rook endgame was agreed a draw after 48 moves.



**GM Diptayan Ghosh (2573)** and **GM Tiger Hillarp (2462)** started up with a rare version of a King's Indian Attack: 1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nc6 3.d4 Bg4 4.Bg2 Dd7. Castling long was an interesting choice from black, but sacrificing a center pawn with 8.... e5? afterwards was a bit loose. Ghosh took the pawn, and while black was busy getting it back he started a pawn storm on the kingside. Taking back the center pawn as soon as possible was natural and tempting, but turned out to be a serious mistake:



15.... Nxe5? 16.Bxa7+! Kxa7 17.Qd4+ Kb8 18.Qxe5 and white was a very sound pawn up with additional positional assets. Ghosh within a few moves forced a won rooks and minor piece endgame, and black respectfully resigned as he after 38 moves lost another pawn.



**Johansson vs Makhnev**

The fourth board duel between **IM Linus Johansson (2392)** and **GM Denis Makhnev (2537)** started up with a modest Queen's Gambit Accepted, in which black gave back the pawn to exchange the c- and d-pawns. White got no advantage and no problems from the opening, hence a draw upon black's suggestion was agreed in a very equal position after 17 moves. Johansson following this probably needs to win all his remaining games to score his final GM norm.

**IM Moksh Doshi (2369)** versus **IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2481)** saw another Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein line, but in this one white's pair of bishops as intended gave him an edge. Removing the knight from f6 with 16.--- Nd7? was a positional mistake, and following this white before move 20 had a promising kingside attack. Kvaløy however managed to defend and the pawn sacrifice with 27.h6?! Qxh6 28.Nc7? later was a dubious plan from white. After winning back the pawn, white still had the initiative with queen, rook, bishop and five pawns against queen, rook, knight and five pawns. A critical moment came soon after the first time control, as black had sacrificed two pawns to achieve counterplay against the white king.



Now 43.--- Qe2! 44.Ra1 Nxc4 45.Bf4 h5 still offered fair chances for a draw. Exchanging queens with 43.--- Qxd4? practically lost the game, as the bishop and two pawns versus rook endgame after 44.exd4 Nxf1 45.Kxf1 Rc8 46.c5 turned out to be a rather safe win for the bishop side. Doshi following this somewhat unexpectedly is first among the GM norm candidates with a norm performance above 2580, although he still needs at least 2.0/3 for a norm. Kvaløy following his double puncture in round 5 and 6 somewhat unexpectedly is out of the norm run before round 7.

**IM Lukas Dotzer (2453)** versus **IM Jonah B. Willow (2471)** saw a French Tarrasch with 3.--- Be7, reaching after 12 moves a fairly balanced position which was agreed a draw upon black's suggestion. It came a bit unexpected as both are ambitious young players and much needed a full point to fight for a GM- norm. Both probably now must win all three remaining games to score a norm.



**Dotzer vs Willow**



**Urazayev vs Mitusov**

**IM Arystabek Urazayev (2467) and IM Semen Mitusov (2459)**

discussed a Four Knights Opening in which well-known tactical exchanges before move 15 eliminated both the queens, all the knights and all the center pawns. White due to his more active bishops kept a slight initiative, but the symmetrical pawn structure obviously made it very difficult to win with only rooks and bishops left. Black defended by sound means and before 40 moves had

exchanged it down to a very drawish bishop endgame with six pawns on each side. The game for unknown reasons continued 20 more moves. The length probably was affected by the fact that both players very much needed a full point to fight for a GM-norm. Both can still do it, but will need 3/3 from now on.

**GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2481) versus FM Jacob Templen Grave (2337)** saw a Four Knights opening in which black after 15 moves was fine if not better – having exchanged the dark-squared bishops plus one set of knights. The tide however turned as the FM a bit naively took the pawn which the GM apparently just blundered:



20.--- Bxh3? 21.Bxh3 Qxh3 22.Ng5! hxg5 23.Rh2 and black lost his queen for rook, knight and pawn. Offering a rook exchange afterwards was another mistake, as the remaining endgame with queen and five pawns against rook, knight and six pawns due to white's queenside pawn majority was more or less winning. Rozentalis before move 40 had created a passed c-pawn which soon after the time control won more material.





**Kulaots vs Csonka**

Estonian **GM Kaido Kulaots (2510)** and Hungarian **IM Balázs Csonka (2459)** entered a good old Ruy Lopez Berlin line. White exchanged his light-squared bishop at c6 and got the better pawn structure, obviously hoping that black's pair of bishops would not be that dangerous in a very closed position. The strategy did not work out too well as black castled long and kept his king fairly safe at b8, with an attack coming up on the kingside. Both players here spent much time between move 10 and

20, and Kulaots from move 19 had less than five minutes left on the clock with an uphill position on the board. Exchanging a knight for black's dark-squared bishop at d6 did not help much for anything, and as black later had a d-pawn he could create a space advantage with 23.--- d5 and 24.--- d4. Black's position following this was much better, but after closing down the center and opening the h-file he still had a problem of how to make a breakthrough against the white king.



37.--- Nxf3!? 38.Rxf3 Bxg4 was a promising try, but short of time the GM found a clever defence: 39.Qg3 Bh3+ 40.Ke1 Qh1+ 41.Ng1 Bg2 42.Rf1 a6 43.Qf2 Bxf1 44.Kxf1 Rh2 45.Qf3! forced a queen exchange. The remaining endgame with rook and seven pawns against bishop, knight and five pawns might be better for black, but could also be double-edged. Csonka exchanged the queens and then forced a draw with 46.--- Rh1+ 47.Ng1 Rh2 48.Nf3 Rh1+ etc. This game illustrates very well how difficult it is to defeat a GM above 2500, even when you are well ahead on the clock with a much better position. Draw as black against Kulaots seen isolated is a good result for Csonka, but this still was a wasted chance as the Hungarian IM now probably needs 2,5/3 for a GM norm.

Talking about Hungarians: **GM Gergely Kántor (2578)** versus **FM Sondre Melaa (2344)** saw an Italian opening, within theory and without any exchanges for the first 15 moves. Castling short here was risky was black, and taking a kingside pawn with 19.--- Nxh4?! afterwards was even more risky. The punishment soon came.



21.--- Ng6? 22.Nf6+ Kg7 23.Bh4 Rh8 24.Nh5+ Rxh5 25.Qxh5 Qxh4 26.Qxh4 Nxh4 27.Rxf7+ and white had a winning attack after giving up two minor pieces for rook and pawn. White probably should have had something better than winning back two minor pieces for a rook. Kántor still was a pawn up with a winning position in the rooks and minor pieces and game, when Melaa at move 39 blundered a rook and resigned.





**IM Svyatoslav Bazakutsa (2474)** and **FM Eivind Grunt Kreken (2326)** also started up with a Queen's Gambit Accepted, although this one was anything but slow and safe. The game started up with 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4!? Nf6 4.e5 Nd5 5.Bxc4 Bf5 6.Nc3 Nb4 7.e6!? fxe6 8.g4 Bc2 9.Qe2 – and very understandably both players soon spent a lot of time. A very critical moment here came at move 14, when black had 20 minutes and white 80 minutes left on the clock. White spent 34 minutes, but still failed to find the best way forward:



The computers give 14.d5! Nb4 15.Kg2! Nac2 16.Rd1 Qd6 17.Bg5 as much better for white, despite black's extra exchange. That position is difficult to assess, while the game continuation with 14.Bf4? Nxd4 15.Nxd4 Qxd4 16.Be5 Qd3 17.Nd5 Rc8 turned out to give white insufficient compensation following a queen exchange. The players after 25 moves still had reached an approximately balanced endgame with rook, bishop, knight and five pawns against rook, two bishops and five pawns, as black short of time chickened out and gave back an exchange. Black later sacrificed a pawn to activate his queenside pawn majority and in the fourth hour had a pressure on the board. White tried to run with his passed a-pawn while holding back the black pawns...



36.a7?! Ra8 and now white had his last chance to limit black's bishop with the pawn sacrifice 37.e5! – as 37.Nb4? Bxb2 38.Nd5 c3+ 39.Kd3 Bxa1 40.Nb6+ Kc6 41.Nxa8 c2 42.Nb6 Kxb6 43.a8Q c1Q left a queen and bishop endgame in which only black had the bishop. 16 year old Bazakutsa is out as a GM-norm candidate after losing this highly interesting game, while Kreken after winning it is around schedule for an IM-norm.



**Kaasen vs Adharsh**

22-year-old **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2472)** and 14-year-old **FM Adharsh K (2317)** entered a lengthy discussion about a Sicilian Richter-Rauzer line in which white castles long, while black keeps his king undeclared at e8. Kaasen had the longest preparation, and white had got some advantage when he around move 16 had to start thinking. White had a c-file and some chances for a kingside attack, but spent much time without finding any good plans.

Consequently black equalized with the center break 28.--- d5!, and took over the advantage as white allowed the pawn to continue with 29.--- dxe4. With both players running short of time, black in turn found nothing better than more exchanges. Black was still better when offering a draw at move 36, although a drawish rooks and minor piece endgame was about to occur.

**FM Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2305)** as white in a Sicilian against **IM Yang-Fan Zhou (2418)** went for a closed but rather aggressive set up with 2.d3 and 3.f4. Black hit back in the center with 10.--- d4! and reached approximately balanced chances, although white still had a slight initiative after 16.e5 and 17.exf6. Black following a queen exchange temporarily gave up a pawn, and then became too eager to snatch it back with 20.--- Rf5 and 22.--- Rxe5? 23 Bf3 followed by 24.Rc7 for a few moves gave white a strong initiative. 14 year old Myagmarsuren however failed to test the most critical lines afterwards, hence it all dried out to a drawish double rook endgame before move 30.



**Fiskaaen vs Vestby-Ellingsen**

**FM Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2283)** and **IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2398)** investigated a rare Zukertort variation with 2... b5!?, but after an exchange of the b-pawns this still resulted in a fairly conventional and rather closed English position. White went for a pawn storm on the kingside with 16.f5 and 17.g4, but the position became rather closed as black was able to block the key square at g5. Draw was agreed in a rather closed position after 29 moves, as the open b-file could be used only for exchanges.



**Eliseev vs Garg**

**FM Sergey Eliseev (2226)** versus **IM Aradhya Garg (2387)** was another Four Knights opening. In this one both players castled short, after which white went for a double-edged kingside pawn storm with 8.h3, 10.g4!?, 12.Ng3 and 13.h4. White at move 23 sacrificed a bishop at h6, but this did not change much as black did not have to accept the sacrifice. Three moves later it was time to retreat the bishop, but stubborn Eliseev instead continued forward:





26.Bxg7+? Bxg7 27.h6 Bf8 28.Rb7 Ng5 29.Nxg5 Rxg5 and black had consolidated his kingside with an extra piece. Garg first handled the situation very well, but later allowed white to create a passed a-pawn with disturbing counterplay. After 40 moves white's passed pawn had reached a7 and the situation in the diagonal h1-a8 was very tense:

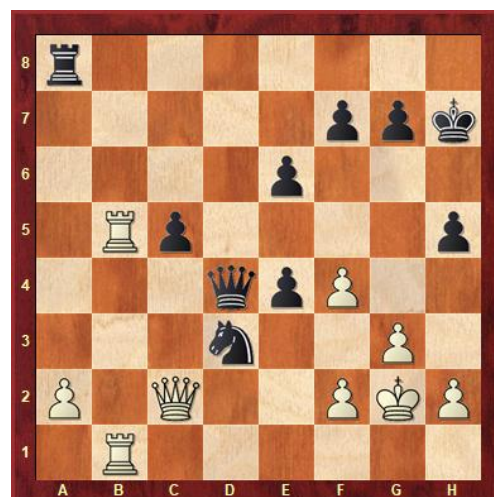


White had moved his queen back and forth between f3 and c6 for the last two moves, and now 43.Qf3! would have been a strong invitation to a draw – as black is a piece up, but has very few available moves. Closing the diagonal with 43.f3? however was a serious misunderstanding, as white's king now suddenly came in danger after 43.--- Bh6! After 44.Kh2 Bf4+?!, white made another mistake and lost after 45.Kh3? Qc8! 46.Qxf6 Qxb7 47.Qh4+ Bh6. 45.Kh1 however also leaves white's king in severe danger after 45.--- Bh6, one possible variation is 46.Kh2 Qd8! 47.Rxc7 Bf4+ 48.Kh1 Qxd3. Garg following this win makes a solid plus result, and might even reach a GM-norm if he can win three more games. Losing this one of course was a hard set back for Eliseev's IM-norm chances, although he is still only about half a point behind schedule.

Today's sensation man was 19 year old **Peder Marcus Aamodt (2242)**, winning as black against **GM Erik Blomqvist (2475)**. The opening was a London system in which white tried to snatch a testimony pawn with 7.Qb5+ and 8.Qxb7. Material and chances were about balanced in a rather messy position after 14 moves, as white's queen had taken pawns at b7 and a7, while black's rook had taken pawns at b2 and c2. Then the GM continued too far and too fast on the greedy track:



14.--- Nxe5! and now 15.fxe5 Qxd4 16.0-0 Rxf2 17.Rxf2 Qxa1+ 18.Rf1 Qd4+ was a possible draw by repetition. White half an hour ahead on the clock instead won an exchange with 15.Qa4+? Qd7 16.Qxc2, but soon was in trouble following 16.--- Nd3+ 17.Kf1 Qxd4 18.Rb1 0-0. Blomqvist after the game concluded that his calculations just were not good enough in this game. It is hard to disagree, as the talented 2200-player made the better calculations also at the next critical stage:



23.Rb7? also was too optimistic, and following 23.--- Qd5! 24.Qb3 c4 25.Qd1 e3+ 26.Qf3 Rxa2 27.Qxd5 Rxf2+ black soon won decisive material. Aamodt has another plus result within reach following this win, but following his slow start he is still no candidate for an IM-norm.



**Miezis vs Skotheim**

Latvian **GM Normunds Miezis (2409)** as white against Norwegian **CM Andreas Skotheim (2229)** tested one of his English systems, but transposed into some Benoni relative as he went for 5.d4 and 6.d5. Sacrificing a pawn at g5 here was an interesting idea for black, although white kept the extra pawn and came clearly better as he later castled long. A messy struggle followed, but white all of the time was a pawn up on the board and some minutes ahead on the clock

– and black's king was at least as exposed as the white. The GM anyway had a winning attack when black after 42 moves overlooked a tactical Rxb6 and resigned.



**Lund vs Southcott-Moyers**

**FM Gunnar Lund (2341)** and **CM Indy Southcott-Moyers (2227)** tested out a London system in which black exchanged first his c-pawn at d4, and then his knight for a bishop at f4. Black and his pair of bishops after this had a close to equal position, although the light-squared bishop at c8 was a bit passive. The game was drawn by a fairly sound repetition after 28 moves, after white a bit loosely had sacrificed his key pawn at e5. Lund is out of it for this week as an

IM nom candidate, while Indy might still be in.



13 year old **FM Rishi Vijayakumar (2317)** and 15 year old **Louis Khoo-Thwe (2118)** entered a lively Queen's Gambit Accepted, in which white got the chance to play e4 followed by e5 with a strong initiative. Trying to create counterplay, black a bit loosely sacrificed both his queenside pawns. White would have been two pawns up with a clear advantage if simply taking back a pawn at d4 in move 16, but instead strangely went into a disturbing c-file pin. Then white even more strangely gave his king many worries by inviting black to exchange at f3, weakening the kingside pawn structure.



Black should avoid exchanging his light-squared bishop, but would have had a promising attack if doing so with 19... Qg5+ 20.Kh1 Ba8 – as 21.Bxe6? Qf4! is much too dangerous for the white king. Sacrificing an exchange with 19... Rxc4? 20.Nxc4 Qg5+ 21.Kh1 asked for too much, and white due to his material advantage reached a winning advantage after 21... Qf4?! 22.Ra3 d3? 23.Nd6+ Ke7 24.Rxd3. White completed his attack and won further material within a few more moves.



**Hedman vs Brattgjerd**

**IM Erik Hedman (2276)** as white in a Caro-Kann Two Knights attack against **Isak Vinh Brattgjerd (2202)** went for an old trap line with 5.Qe2. Black wisely inserted 5... Nxe4 instead of falling victim for 5... Nbd7?? 6.Nd6 mate. Queens soon were exchanged, leaving a fairly typical Caro-Kann position in which white had a small space advantage and black a fairly sound and safe position. As white came up with nothing but some sound exchanges, the players after 24 moves agreed a

draw in a balanced position with two rooks, two bishops and six pawns on each side.

**Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (2167)** and **FM Vegar Koi Gandrud (2273)** entered a modern and aggressive Sicilian Najdorf line, in which white tries to start up a kingside attack with 6.Rg1!? and 8.g4. Black's set up her was inaccurate, hence white after castling long could play 13.f4! with a strong initiative. Black also castled long, but still ran into problems with the white rook from g1:



Black here should have used his chance to invite a queen exchange with 20.--- Qc4!, as the slow 20.--- g6? allowed a strong swinging rook maneuver: 21.Rg3 Kb8 22.Rc3 Qd7 23.Nc6+ Nxc6 24.dxc6 Qc7 25.cxb7 Qxb7 26.Qa4 Ka8? 27.Rb3 and black resigned.



**Østensen vs Tørfoss**

The young Norwegian lions **FM Nicolai Østensen (2260)** and **Sivert Schanche Tørfoss (2141)** started up with a rather long theory duel in an English Four Knights opening. Black more or less forced himself to exchange his bishop for a knight with 13.--- Bxe4, leaving white with a pair of bishops and a pleasant c-file pressure. Black however equalized and even took over the initiative as he was allowed to play 22.--- c5! and establish a passed pawn with

23.--- c4. Black later increased his initiative by a tactical 28.--- Nd4! White had to exchange the knight at b3, after which black got a strong passed pawn. Tørfoss in short hit back from a dubious opening with a very good middle game, and before move 40 was close to winning due to his passed pawn at a2. With only seconds left on the clock, black however lost all his advantage with a blunder at move 40:



40.--- Nb6?? 41.Bxe5 and white suddenly was a pawn up with a lot of counterplay. Black gradually accepted exchanges leading to a drawish endgame with queen, bishop and three kingside pawns against queen, bishop and four kingside pawns. With some 45 minutes more on the clock and a pawn more on the board, Østensen of course continued to play for a win even in a drawish queen endgame. He was rewarded after bravely marching his king up to g5:



Black now should have taken control over the sixth rank with 73.--- Qc6!, as 73.--- Qe3? 74.h6! g6 75.Kf6 suddenly gave white a decisive attack!

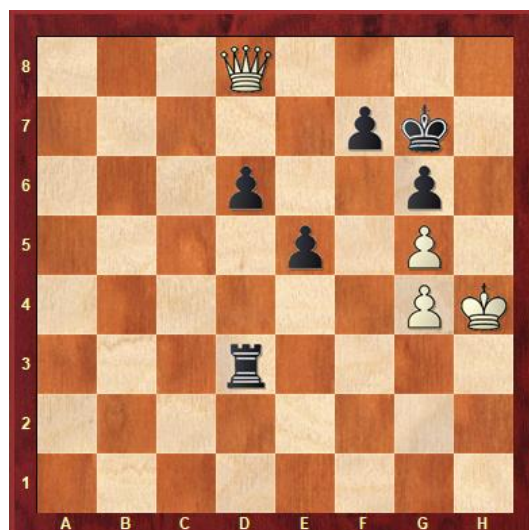


13 year old American **IM Eshaan Hebbar (2175)** and ten year old English **FM Ethan Pang (2257)** tested a Queen's Gambit Accepted, in which a not well-timed e4-plan from white gave black a pleasant initiative. Exchanging queens in turn was a misunderstood plan from black, and the players later entered a balanced endgame with the same three minor pieces and the same six pawns on each side. After 36 moves white had 45 minutes against one minute on the clock. A draw was immediately agreed as black safely passed the time control and at the same time could force exchanges to a rather easy bishop endgame.

**FM Martin Øksendal (2250)** and **David Mindestrømmen Simonsen (2034)** went for a long Sicilian Najdorf theory duel. Black came far ahead on the clock, while white and his pair of bishops kept an initiative on the board. White castled long, while black after 20 moves still had his king undeclared at e8. The trend continued in favour of white, as he after exchanging the queens could pick up black's loose pawn at a5. Castling short at move 25 actually was a mistake from black, and his position afterwards was close to losing. Simonsen however fought on well and Øksendal made things a bit more complicated by entering a tactical carousel losing an exchange. As Øksendal passed 40 moves with a few seconds left on the clock, he due to the passed pawns at a4 and b4 still had a winning endgame with two bishops and five pawns against rook, knight and four pawns. A win for white was considered «soon upcoming» after 45 moves, but black still had a clever resource:



47.Ba5! Rxa5 48.b6 Ra3 49.b7 Rxa7 50.b8Q and white had got his new queen, but the game still was not over. Black was close to a fortress in which his protected rook at d4 could stop the white king from ever crossing the fourth rank. Simonsen reached such a situation within a few moves, and Øksendal in the self-critical end forced a draw by stalemate:



69.Qh8+ Kxh8

½ - ½

**Morten Andersen (2200)** and **Per Fredrik Holand (2070)** on the other hand entered a Sicilian-inspired Zukertort opening, reaching after 15 moves a well-known and fairly balanced isolated queen's pawn position. This remained balanced and rather static both before and after a queen exchange, hence a draw was agreed after 22 moves.

**Sigurd Kittilsen (2010)** had another Sicilian theory duel, today as white in a Kalashnikov variation against **CM Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2193)**. Westrum had the longer preparation, and despite two isolated d-pawns he reached balanced chances after exchanging three minor pieces. The remaining minor pieces were opposite coloured bishops, leaving black with a dominance on the dark squares and white with a dominance on the light squares. Black had some initiative, but white had fair chances until underestimating the dangers for his queen in the center:



23.Qe4? Be3! and white suddenly had a hard time saving both his queen and the bishop. Black soon won after 24.Re2 Qc8 25.Rae1? f5 26.Qe7 Rxd3.

Talented Norwegian teenagers **William Alexander Olsen (2188)** and **Nikolay Den Roover (2004)** set sails with 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d5 b5 4.e4 Nxe4 and some rare Benkö Gambit cousin. The whole thing was rather open and a bit loose for black, and postponing the kingside development he soon ran into tactical problems:



10.--- exd5?! 11.0-0! d4? 12.Bf4! Qc8 13.Rfe1+ Ne7 14.Bd6 Ng8 15.Nd5 Bxd5 16.cxd5 Kf8 17.Rxe7! Nxe7 18.Re1 and white won by check mate only four moves later on.

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (2002)** versus **WFM Valentina Verbin (2113)** started up with a Delayed Alapin line in a Sicilian. White established a center advantage, although black after exchanging the light-squared bishops had a pleasant position with counterplay against white's hanging pawns at c4 and d4. White's try to exchange the pawns instead ended up losing an exchange:



22.Nxa5? Re2 23.Bf2 d4 24.Rxd4 Nxd4 25.Qxd4 and black was winning. Verbin remained an exchange up for the next ten moves, but spent too much time on the clock. A small time trouble drama consequently followed:





36.a5? was a blunder as 36.--- Qxf3! would have been mate in a few moves. Instead 36.--- Rxb2? 37.Qxb2 Qa8 38.Qb6 improved white's chances a lot. Verbin following a queen exchange tried hard to win the remaining endgame with rook and three pawns versus bishop and four pawns. As she again ran short of time, Hausken could sacrifice his passed a-pawn and scrape a draw by eliminating the remaining black kingside pawns.



**Berget vs Lilliehöök**

**Eirik Berget (2041)** versus **Victor Lilliehöök (1993)** was a Sicilian Lasker-Pelikan line, in which black after exchanging three sets of minor pieces had the better pawn structure and no problems whatsoever. Lilliehöök had promising pressure against white's isolated e4-pawn around move 20-26, but then overlooked a tactical 27.Rxf6! – and so white could exchange his weak pawn at e4 for one of black's healthy kingside pawns. Following this the

game soon drifted into a drawn queen endgame.



**Strømhaug vs Kaushik**

**Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (2020)** and **CM Ashwath Kaushik (1958)** had a rather balanced Sicilian Four Knights battle. Black held an initiative most of the time, but found nothing concrete. During mutual time pressure before move 40, the players exchanged it down to a drawish rook and minor piece endgame with four pawns for each player. Black eventually won a pawn when entering the rook endgame, but the reduced material combined

with an active rook here gave white a fairly safe draw.



**Arvola vs Gåsland**

The Norwegian teenage duel between **Daniel Arvola (2088)** and **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1994)** saw a closed Ruy Lopez, in which black first had a pleasant initiative when the position opened. The tide turned abruptly at move 22, as black misplaced his own bishop at e2 and following this had to give up two minor pieces for rook and pawn. Both players under growing time pressure in a still complex position made some mistakes, but white all the time

had two minor pieces for a rook and after the time control his position soon turned winning. White anyway had a decisive attack when black at move 51 blundered a mate in three.

**Benjamin Halvorsen (1966)** and **Pantham Kaewpitakkun (2026)** in the meantime discussed a Sicilian Najdorf line in which white soon ran into problems on the dark squares, after exchanging his dark-squared bishop for a knight with 16.Bxc5?. Black following this held a strong initiative, but soon returned the favour as he overlooked a tactical hit when castling long:



19.Bxa6! Bxa6 20.Nxc5 Qxc5 21.Qa8+ Kc7 22.Qxa6 Rd6 23.Qb5 and the players soon reached a drawish rooks and knight endgame. Both players later made sensible move and a draw was agreed in a much too equal rook endgame after 42 moves.

**Amund Strand Pihl (1914)** and **Lars Tormod Haugen (1988)** discussed a closed and positional Sicilian, in which black had two bishops and white two knights. Black following passive play from white first got a promising pressure against white's backward pawn at d3. Exchanging queens was a natural plan for white, but black due to white's still miserable knights was totally dominant in the rook and minor pieces endgame. Black following this anyway was winning when white after 30 moves blundered first a knight and then a mate.

**Nikolai Olsen Wernberg (1893)** got a bye in the pairings for this round, but is among his chess friends as Fagernes and will be back for round 7.



# Open Group

The **Open** for a change had no winner on the first board, as **Sondre Stai (1786)** and **Karim Ali (1876)** agreed a draw in an approximately balanced position with queen, rook, knight and five pawns for each player after 32 moves. White held a slight initiative most of the game, but black defended well.

The board two duel between **Isai Sivaparan (1944)** and **Thobias Gotaas Hansen (1805)** first was approximately balanced, but suddenly turned in favour of the 13 year old white player following a tactical hit:



17.Nf5! Qd8? 18.Qxe6+! Kh8 19.Nxd6 and white won safely within 12 more moves.



Stai vs Ali



Sivaparan vs Gotaas Hansen

Third board saw a generation duel between 59 year old **Guttorm Andersen (1842)** and 12 year old **August Solbu (1887)**, won by the older generation as white's pair of bishops and passed pawn efficiently took out their potential in the rooks and minor pieces endgame.

**Vidar Kopperud (1778)** again had a half-long and sensible draw, this time as white on the fourth board against **Christian Neukamm (1776)**.

Fifth board was an exciting teenage-duel, in which second rated **Tomas Engkvist (1969)** demonstrated his potential by gradually outplaying yesterday's sensation man **Daniel Vollheim (1764)**.

Sondre Stai following this is at 5,5/6 and defended his lead, with Karim Ali, Guttorm Andersen and Isai Sivaparan sharing the second place at 4,5. No less than seven players can be found at 4,0, hence the field so far is rather open behind the full point leader. Also the first prize no way is given with three rounds to go. For round 7 Stai was lucky to get the white pieces against highly talented Savaparan, who won the Nordic Championships Under 12 earlier this year. Ali will get white in the veteran's duel against Andersen on the second board.

Top rated **Mikael Aroven (2145)** appeared disillusioned following yesterday's hard loss, and today accepted a short draw as black against his travel companion **Gusztav Lang (1729)**.

A close to-sensation came on board 16, as **Anne Grete Nebell (1561)** dominated the game as white against **Sara Gilsdottir (1738)**. Sara however fought on well in an interesting rook and bishop endgame, and was rewarded as Anne Grete got tired and blundered a full rook. Sara will get hard competition for the best woman prize, as **Catherine Jørgensen (1609)** today won well deserved as black against **Morten S. Smedsrud (1699)**.

19.Bg6? was tricky but not strong. Catherine demonstrated why by the ice cold 19.--- Bxf1!  
20.Qxe6+ Kd8 21.Bxf7 Bd3 22.Qe8+ Kc7 and later safely exchanged down to a winning endgame.





**Nebell vs Gilsdottir**



**Wen vs Wærstad**

Not to forget: The youngest and lowest rated participant, ten year old **Liana Wen (1404)** of England, won by a nice attack as white against Norwegian veteran and chess gentleman **Leif Edvin Wærstad (1606)**.



21. --- Nxe5?? came under pressure and was too tricky, as white soon won a pawn after  
22.Qxe5 Qxd6 23.Qxg7 Qf4+ 24.Kb1 Rh8 25.Rhe1!

**Photos by Tom Eriksen**