

# FAGERNES CHESS INTERNATIONAL 2025

## THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT

# 9



### GM Group

Norwegian GM Frode Urkedal and Kazakshtani GM Rinat Jumabayev shared the lead at 6,0/8 before the start of this round, half a point ahead of six other very strong players.

The last round started up with a focus on the top four boards, which had two GM-norms and all the top prizes at stake. All four key games were still running after two hours. Top-rated GM Gergely Kántor had offered a draw after eight moves as black against Urkedal. The Norwegian GM played on for an unshared first prize – but apparently came worse as he in the middle game had to give up two minor pieces for rook and pawn. Second-rated GM Diptayan Ghosh also offered an early draw as black on the third board against IM Arystanbek Urazayev. The Kazakhstani IM needed a win for his third GM-norm and refused the offer, but spent much time and apparently got no advantage from a rather closed Italian opening. Hungarian IM Balázs Csonka also needed a full point to score his decisive GM-norm and held a slight initiative from the opening as white against so far unbeaten GM Raja Rithvik R. The sensation man on the top boards, 18 year old Norwegian Eivind Kreken, first had a solid position in a Sicilian Maroczy Bind as white against GM Rinat Jumabayev – but then started a risky king maneuver with Kd2 and Kc2.

The first big answer came after three hours: Ghosh held a slight initiative against Urazayev, but still accepted the draw offer after 19 moves. Both players finished at 6,0/9, which could only give a shared third or fourth prize.

Kreken had a safe king after exchanging queens, and was pressing in the rooks and minor piece endgame. Csonka was pressing against Raja, while both players spent much time in a somewhat messy position. In the fourth hour Csonka did not want to take a pawn, and instead the players suddenly exchanged several pieces.

**Csonka refused a draw offer, but offered himself a couple of moves later – as Raja was about to reach an obviously drawn bishop endgame. Kántor was now playing for a win on the first board, but Urkedal had reached a close to balanced endgame with two rooks and four pawns against rook, bishop, knight and three pawns.**

**After four and a half hours Urkedal had the draw under reasonable control in a slightly original endgame with rook and pawn against rook and two pawns. Jumabayev on the other hand was now under growing pressure, after giving up his minor piece for two pawns. Urkedal after five and a half hours had got confirmed his draw and for all practical purposes also a shared first prize – as Jumabayev now could only hope for a draw. The top boards finished with a sensation as Kreken after almost six hours could exchange the rooks and reach a won position with queen against pawn.**



**Kreken and Urkedal**

Norwegians Urkedal and Kreken following this became the only players to reach 6,5/9, and won 2000 Euros each for their shared first and second prize.

Fourth rated Urkedal hardly was a surprise on shared first, as he is usually scoring above expected at Fagernes and has been top three several times before – as best first back in 2020. Kreken on the other hand was rated as number 30 and is the biggest sensation we have seen in top three for the Fagernes tournaments so far.

With eight players sharing the third to tenth prizes at 6,0/9, Csonka very well deserved was first among equals and finished third in the list due to his higher average of opponents. GM Raja, GM Jumabayev, IM Urazayev, GM Ghosh and GM Kántor all reached 6,0/9 and won 280 Euros each. The two last players in this group became the Norwegian IMs Semen Mitusov and IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen. This was very well deserved, as they in the last round won entertaining games against GM Edurdas Rozentalis and GM Denis Makhnev respectively.

Kreken in the end got his second IM-norm with a full one-point overscore, but still was half a point away from a sensational GM-norm. Other title norm candidates failed in the last round as Csonka and Urazayev both got a draw while needing a win, while the young English CM Indy Southcott-Moyers failed a possible IM-norm as he lost an exciting five-hour battle against IM Lukas Dotzer.

GM Tiger Hillarp of Sweden reached 5,5/9 and won the best veteran prize, while young WFM Valentina Verbin of Moldova won the best woman prize.

Five competitors for the best veteran prize in such a field is acceptable, while only one female participant was a small scandal. Timing was very unlucky as the European Women Championships ended immediately before our tournament started, while several strong female players from India and Uzbekistan for various understandable reasons had to cancel within the last 2–3 weeks before our tournament. We have an official goal to see at least 10 female players in our next GM group at Fagernes, planned to start at October 5<sup>th</sup> 2025!

The first board duel between **GM Frode Urkedal (2550)** and **GM Gergely Kántor (2578)** started up with a Classical Nimzo-Indian, in which white routinely gets the pair of bishops as black exchanges his bishop for a knight at c3 in move 6. It's worth noting that Kántor offered a draw after 8.--- b6, but Urkedal refused the offer to play for a possibly unshared first place. The first hour of this game went in favour of white, as he after 14 moves was 50 minutes ahead on the clock and the computers due to his better pawn structure gave him an advantage. White however had not completed the piece development or castled his king. Urkedal spent 25 minutes for his move 15, but became too optimistic when he went for a direct attack against black's isolated pawn at c5:



15.Bd6? Rfd8! 16.Qxc5 Rxd6! 17.Qxd6 Qxd2+ 18.Kxd2 Ne4+ and black had taken over the advantage with two knights for rook and pawn. Kantor however chose an inaccurate plan afterwards, and so white's active rooks plus queenside pawn majority almost balanced the chances. Black after 30 moves had one minute against 20 on the clock, but still left a repetition to play for first place. Both players later had a very high level for the rest of the game, and so black always had more margin while white according to the computers never was in danger of losing. White exchanged his a- and b-pawns on the queenside for the black a-pawn, to exchange some pawns and establish a new pawn majority on the kingside. Black soon after the first time control gave back two minor pieces for a rook, to reach a rook endgame with two against one pawn. Black's remaining pawns however were scattered e- and h-pawns, and white's pawn at g7 was disturbing enough to save him a draw.



57.Re7+ Kd5 58.Ke3 Rg4 59.g8Q+ Rxg8 60.Rxe4 Rh8 61.Kf3 h3 62.Re1 h2 63.Kg2 h1K 64.Rxh1 Rxh1 65.Kxh1 ½-½



Kántor as the highest rated player of the tournament could not be satisfied to finish eight in the final list, but still won a money prize. Scoring 5,5/8 plus a walk over draw, he had a fairly normal Elo performance of 2552. Urkedal of course could be very well satisfied with 6,5/9, winning 2000 Euros and 12 Elo points. Remarkably the Norwegian GM as white was not very successful with 3,0/5, while he did a great result with 3,5/4 as black.



**Kreken vs Jumabayev**

The second board duel between **FM Eivind Kreken (2326)** and **GM Rinat Jumabayev (2549)** started up with a Sicilian Kan, transposing into a Maroczy Bind. Highly original, but still not unique, white instead of castling short here transported his king over to the queenside with 12.Kd2!? and 13.Kc2. It appeared a bit risky following 13.--- d5!, and around move 16–20 black according to the computers had a promising advantage. Black however was

helpful when exchanging queen and bishop for queen and knight at move 19–20, as white now got a pair of bishops and a much less afraid king. Black won a pawn and kept it for many moves, but white due to his passed c-pawn and active pieces had full compensation with two rooks, bishop and three pawns against two rooks, knight and four pawns after 32 moves. Computers interestingly gave it as a sound decision when black sacrificed his knight for white's passed pawn at c6, leaving an endgame with rook, bishop and two pawns for white against rook and four pawns. Black here had a rather backward passed pawn at a6 plus three against two kingside pawns. For a human eye it was a strong feeling that black following this had the more difficult position to play and only could hope for a draw. With both players seriously short of time, black made an instructive mistake by allowing white's king to pass the e-file and reach the kingside.

After the first time control computers too gave white's position as close to winning, and Kreken found a good plan when exchanging his f-pawn to open for a king march against the remaining black pawns on the queenside. White's only remaining pawn now was an h-pawn, but this was not that much a problem as his dark-squared bishop could control the promotion square at h8. With one minute left on the clock, the GM offered a rook exchange. The FM spent four of his remaining ten minutes, but then took the challenge:



57.Rxb4! axb4 58.Ke2! Kh5 59.Bf2 Kg5 60.Kd3 Kf4 61.h4 b3 62.Kc3 Kf3 63.h5 Kxf2 64.h6 b2 65.Kxb2 f4 66.h7 f3 67.h8Q and white had won the passed pawn race with a one tempo margin. Black resigned after 67.--- Kg2 68.Qg7+ Kh2 69.Qf6 Kg2 70.Qg5+ Kh1 71.Qh5+ Kg2 72.Qg4.

34-year-old Jumabayev's tournament had a great first half with 4,5/5 and a somewhat disappointing second half with 1,5/4. All taken together his performance now was well below the level from last year, when he scored 7,0/9 and won both the Fagernes tournaments. Despite losing to a player rated more than 200 points lower in the last round, he still made a performance of 2559 and won two Elo points.

18 year old Eivind Grunt Kreken was ranked 30 out of 68 players in the GM-group before round 1. His second IM-norm was not that much of a surprise, taking into consideration that he scored his first IM-norm in the same tournament last year. Scoring an IM-norm with a one point overscore and sharing first prize with a performance of 2550 of course still qualifies as a true sensation. It will be exciting to see whether he can complete the IM title later this year, as the 2400 demand is within reach following 56 new Elo points from this tournament.

The main surprise in the third board duel between **IM Arystanbek Urazayev (2467)** and **GM Diptayan Ghosh (2573)** was that nothing really happened. Urazayev knew that he needed a full point to reach his third GM-norm, and refused a draw offer at move 7. He still made a rather slow and safe start with an Italian opening. Later white spent a lot of time and black a bit less, but nothing happened except for a knight exchange at h4. All 16 pawns still were on the board and black had a very slight initiative when white after 19 moves offered a draw, which black accepted. Urazayev after the game explained that his preparation failed and that he from the resulting position saw no possibility to play for a win. Shared 3.-10. prize with 6,0/9 and a performance of 2553 for him was a very good result, winning 11 Elo points and 280 Euros.

Second-ranked GM Diptayan Ghosh had a solid but not very inspired first tournament at Fagernes, scoring three wins and six draws with a performance of 2547.

**IM Balázs Csonka (2459)** also needed a win to score his third GM norm. As white against **GM Raja Rithvik R (2538)** he went for a patient English fianchetto. Both players spent a fair amount of time on the clock, while white tried to start up a kingside attack with 15.f4!?. White exchanged his e5-pawn at f4, planted a knight on the d4 outpost and hit back with 17.---f5 – reaching approximately equal chances with possibilities for both players. White had a slight initiative in the middle game. After exchanging two sets of minor pieces, computers gave white a promising advantage in a dynamic position with a poor pawn structure for both players:



**Csonka vs Rithvik**



Black's compensation would not have been obvious if white had just taken the pawn with 29.Rxf5, although white obviously would have had a long road to realizing the extra pawn. Instead 29.Nd6?! Bf4! 30.Nxf5 Qg5 31.Be4 Bxe5 32.Rg2 Qh5 33.Rxg8+ Kxg8 34.Qa2 Kh8! won back the pawn with full quality.

Black refused a draw offer after 35.Rg1 Ng7 36.Nxg7 Rxg7, but accepted the inevitable in a dead drawn opposite-coloured bishop endgame after 37.Rxg7 Kxg7 38.Qxa7+ Qf7 39.Qxf7 Kxf7.

Csonka of course had mixed feelings following this last round, as he was clearly better as white in a game which could have completed his GM-title. Following a disappointing result from the individual European Championship, he was still very well satisfied to finish third with a performance of 2576 – winning back 15 Elo points. Csonka by far was the most solid among the IMs in this tournament. 21 year old GM Raja had the same solid result with three wins and the rest draws. Finishing fourth with a performance of 2565, he continues his patient climb upwards and seems likely soon to establish himself above 2550.

**GM Denis Makhnev (2537)** versus **IM Tor Fredrik Kaasen (2472)** saw a Classical King's Indian duel, but not the traditional attacking race. Instead white here left his king uncastled at e1 and tried to start a pawn storm on the kingside. White had a space advantage with pawns at d5 and e4, and kept a slight positional edge after exchanging his dark-squared bishop and knight for the two black knights.

19.--- hxg5?! 20.hxg5 Bg4 appeared risky at best from black, as the open h-file obviously favoured white. Kaasen however fought on with creativity, and after 30.Kc2? c6! the tide had turned as white's king was as much in danger as black's. An exciting attacking race followed with 15 minutes left for white against one minute for black.



Black should have played 38.--- axb2! with a very tense position. Instead 38.--- Rb3?! 39.Rc8+! still would have been messy in case of 39.--- Rf8 40.Rxf8+ Kxf8 41.Qc8+ Qe8, although white would have been a pawn up if exchanging the queens.

Instead 39.--- Bf8? was a time-trouble blunder, as 40.Rxf8+! > 40.--- Rxf8 41.Qc7 Rf7 42.Qc8+ Rf8 43.Qh3 or 40.--- Kxf8 41.Qc8+ Ke7 42.Qe6+ both win for white.

Remarkably Makhnev with almost seven minutes left on the clock spent only a few seconds before he chose 40.Qc2?!, leaving black with a close to winning counterattack after 40.--- axb2 41.Nxb2 Rxf3. The rest was easy from a black point of view, and the GM resigned after 42.Rb8 Qd4! 43.Rxb3 Rxb3 44.Qh2? Rxb2+!



Kaasen had a slow and shaky start with 1,5/3, and following this was never really in the run for his third GM-norm. A strong spurt, culminating with a dramatic last-round win, still saved a place and prize slightly above expected with a sound performance of 2455. Seven rated Makhnev until last round had a solid result, but following the last turn ended up in 21th place with an obviously disappointing performance of 2443.

**GM Ameet Ghasi (2502)** and **GM Kaido Kulaots (2510)** started up with 1.Nf3 g6, later transposing into some kind of Grunfeld exchange fianchetto. White following 11.d5 and 14.dxc6 had slightly the better pawn structure, but black defended actively and entered tactical complications following 15... e4!?



16.Nxc4 Nxc4 17,Nxe4 Bxa1 18.Qxc4 and white had compensation for the exchange.

Taking a second pawn at c6 of course was tempting, but black still became much too active and was clearly better as he picked up the white pawn at a2 a few moves later on.

While taking the pawn at move 24, Kulaots also turned down an offer for a draw. Exchanging queens and dark-squared bishops was fine for black. During mutual time pressure Kulaots however became a bit too eager for piece exchanges, when he also invited an exchange of the light-squared bishops.



**Ghasi vs Kulaots**

The remaining endgame with two rooks and four pawns against rook, knight and five pawns was very difficult to win for black, as white had a strong knight outpost at c5. Kulaots played on for 25 moves but found no way forward, and after 53 moves sacrificed back an exchange to reach a dead drawn rook endgame with three kingside pawns for each player.

Both players following this draw landed on 5,5/9, outside the money prizes and somewhat below their expected places as Kaido was ranked eight and Ghasi ninth. Kulaots noteworthily was undefeated, but had way too many draws and lost eight Elo points in the end. Ghasi following his shaky first round draw reached 2,5/3 and 4,5/6, including a great attacking win against Jumabayev, but fell out of the fight for the top prizes after a crushing loss against Urkedal in round 7. Losing only two Elo points he had a fully acceptable result, although the performance of course was a big step down from the GM-norm performance last October.



**Bazakutsa vs Doshi**

**IM Svyatoslav Bazakutsa (2474)** as white against **IM Moksh Doshi (2369)** went for an English fianchetto and spent more or less no time for his first 13 moves. Doshi however appeared to be well prepared and following an early queen exchange reached a sound and flexible position. Draw was agreed upon black's suggestion after 17 moves, in a fairly balanced position with two rooks, two knights and five pawns on each side. Doshi had a disappointing

finish in this tournament, but started up with 4,5/6 and lost only against Jumabayev. He won 17 Elo points and can be well satisfied with a performance of nearly 2500. 16 year old Bazakutsa had a too shaky tournament, despite many interesting games, and obviously cannot be satisfied with a performance of 2377.

**IM Yang-Fan Zhou (2418)** and **IM Linus Johansson (2392)** entered a potentially very interesting French Advance line – and then upon white's suggestion agreed a draw after 5 moves and 5 minutes. The sudden outcome was caused by none of the players having GM-norm chances, while both had a result they could be well satisfied with – Johansson winning 13 Elo points and Zhou winning 8.



**Mitusov vs Rozentalis**

The generation duel between **IM Semen Mitusov (2459)** and **GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2481)** started up with a Russian/Petrov opening in which all the knights were exchanged within the first eight moves. White had two isolated c-pawns, but still came better as he could immediately start up his four against three kingside pawn majority. 14.--- f6? here was dubious, as white following a tactical 15.e6! could establish a protected passed

pawn at e6. Rozentalis following this anyway was in deep trouble when he went for a much too slow bishop maneuver.



20.--- Qg7! now was needed, as 20.--- Be8?! 21.Rh3 Kg7?! 22.Bxg5! immediately gave white a decisive attack. 22.--- hxg5? 23.Rh7+ Kxh8 24.f6+ will lead to a decisive material win for white, hence the GM stopped the clock.

19-year-old Mitusov following a slow start with 1,5/3 was never really in the run for a GM-norm, but following this inspired last round win he still made a solid plus result with eight new Elo-points and a performance just above 2500.

61-year-old Rozentalis had some problems with his black openings this tournament, and 4,5/9 with a performance of 2341 obviously was far below his expectations. Keep in mind he only two years ago had 6.5/9 with a performance above 2600 in this tournament. The capacity for sure still is there.





**Kvaløy vs Garg**

**IM Aksel Bu Kvaløy (2481)** and **IM Aradhya Garg (2387)** started up with a closed Ruy Lopez which soon became very open.

Black after 16 moves could exchange the queens at d1, although white due to his pawn at e5 and octopus knight at d6 kept a strong initiative. As his knight at f4 was kicked away with 22.g3, black took an active approach with 22.--- Ne2+ 23.Kg2 Nd4!?, accepting a weak pawn after 24.Bxd4?! cxd4. Black now had

counterplay against the white pawn at e5, and after 30 moves had reached a drawish endgame with two rooks, knight and five pawns against two rooks, bishop and five pawns. Black was ahead on the clock, while white due to his passed b-pawn kept a pressure in the rook and minor piece endgame. Black after 59 moves had to give up his bishop for white's passed pawn, and the question was whether his passed d- and h-pawns combined with a reduced number of pawns was sufficient for a draw.



63.--- Ra2! makes it difficult for white to win – two possible and drawish lines are 64.Kf3 Ra3! 65.Nb4 f5! 66.gxf5 g4+ 67.Kg2 d2 and 64.Rf1 d2 65.Rd1 h3 66.Nd4 Kf6 67.Ke3 Ra3+ 68.Kxd2 Ke5.

Such lines are very difficult to work out, and black instead stumbled with 63.--- Rc3? 64.Nd4 h3 65.Ke3 Kf6 66.Rd1 Kg6?! 67.Nf5 Kf6 68.Kd4 Rc2 69.Ke3 d2? 70.Rxd2.

The game lasted 109 moves and became the last to finish in this year's tournament, but without much doubt about the outcome for the

last 30 moves. Kvaløy this time was unable to hold up the speed following a promising start, but following the last-round win he at 5,5/9 still reached a fairly normal performance of 2457. Garg had a plus result until last round, and although losing this he reached a fairly normal performance of 2358.



**FM Jacob Templen Grave (2337)** versus **GM Erik Blomqvist (2475)** started up with a rather open French Tarrasch in which white first had a slight initiative, and then following a queen exchange at c6 the slightly better pawn structure with two rooks, bishop, knight and six pawns left on each side. The GM was under some pressure in this game, but gradually managed to exchange away the white advantage. White passed the first time control with a four-minute margin in an equal rook endgame, which very soon afterwards was agreed a draw by repetition.

Blomqvist has had disappointing results for a few months now, and this trend continued as he landed on 5,0/9 with a performance of only 2262 – losing 22 more Elo points.

21 year old Grave was in the run for an IM-norm until round 8, and made a solid plus result with a performance of 2389 – winning 13 new Elo points.



**Willow vs Fiskaaen**

**IM Jonah B. Willow (2471)** as white against **IM Martin Holten Fiskaaen (2283)** started up with a safe fianchetto in a closed Sicilian, which became very open as white went for 6.d4 and 11.e5.

Having exchanged two sets of minor pieces, white after 15 moves had a pleasant edge due to his better pawn structure. Black had a difficult defence and white before move 30 won black's isolated pawn at c6 with a winning advantage.

Black went for counterplay with his

passed d-pawns and was rewarded following several helpful mistakes from white:



37.Kf1! Qf7 38.Nc7 Rc8 (38.--- Bc3?! 39.Ne6 is good for white) 39.Qd5 Qxc7 40.Qxd4 with 1-2 extra pawns still should win for white. The game instead went 37.Kg2? Qf7 and now 38.Nc7 allows Bc3! 39.Ne6 Rfe8. White instead gave up his queen with 38.Rexd2!? Rc8 39.Qd6 Rfd8 40.Qxd8+ Rxd8 41.Rxd4 – leaving white the easier position to play with two rooks, knight and six pawns against queen, rook and four pawns. Willow demonstrated very good understanding by forcing a rook exchange, and black's queen soon proved unable to stop white's passed c-pawn.

Both players in this game obviously had a better result last time, when Willow scored his first GM-norm and Fiskaaen his first IM-norm. Both still made plus results as Willow at 5,5/9 reached a performance of 2473, while Fiskaaen at 4,5/9 reached a performance of 2309. 22 year old Willow continues his slow climb towards 2500, while Fiskaaen winning nine points here is relatively stable around a 2300-level.

**GM Tiger Hillarp (2462)** as white against **FM Nicolai Østensen (2260)** went for a Classical King's Indian, in which white left his king at e1 and opened the g-file with a kingside attack. 19.--- e4? is a thematic pawn sacrifice to activate the g7-bishop in these positions, but here did not help much as white with a knight at e4 soon had a dangerous attack.



21.--- Bxb2? was a natural idea, but still backfired as white now could bring his rook from a1 to b7. 22.Rb1 Bg7 23.Rxb7 Nf6?! 24.Rxg7! Kxg7 25.Nxd6 and white's attack decided within a few more moves. T

he 54-year-old Tiger as usual contributed with many creative and entertaining games, and following this win got an unshared best veteran prize. 5,5/9 with a performance of 2411 still was below expectations and he has so far failed to turn a falling trend from the last year. 15-year-old Østensen had his ups and downs, but is a hard-fighting young chess lion – illustrated by the fact that he had only one draw during these 9 rounds. 4,5/9 with a performance of 2263 was a result just around expected.



**Soutcott-Moyers vs Dotzer**

16-year-old **CM Indy Soutcott-Moyers (2227)** to score his first IM-norm needed a win as white against 15 year old **IM Lukas Dotzer (2453)**. Indy went for it with 1.d4 2.Nc3 3.Bf4 and the unbalanced Rapport-Jobava system. Both players soon were out of their preparation. White after exchanging his knight for a bishop at g6 had a pair of bishops. Dotzer again spent much time, and white after 19.0-0-0 had an advantage on the board with 32 minutes against

18 on the board. With three minutes left on the clock, black made a risky but interesting decision when snatching a pawn at h4. With both players short of time black's king apparently was in trouble, but Dotzer found a creative solution:



40.--- Qe3! and now Southcott-Moyers spent 20 minutes on his first move after the time control. 41.Rh8+ Ke7 42.Rxc8 Nxc8 43.Qb4+ Kd8 44.Bd1 Ncb6 45.Nc5 wins back the pawn with approximately balanced chances.

White instead went for 41.Qb4?!, and black after 10 minutes found 41.--- Qxe2! 42.Qd6 Qxb2+ 43.Kxb2 Nc4+ 44.Kc3 Nxd6 45.Nxd6 Rb8 with two extra pawns in the rook and knight endgame. White made the right decision when exchanging the rooks, but then came an instructive mistake in the knight endgame:



The black pawn at a4 soon must be eliminated, but it is vital for white to keep his own a-pawn. Due to this white should have activated his king with 50.Kc4! – as 50.--- Nc7 then can be met by 51.Kc5! The game instead went 50.Nxa4? Nc7! 51.Kc4?! Nb5 52.Kc5 Nxa3 and black was much better. Apparently having the knight as his favourite piece, Dotzer won the remaining endgame fairly confidently after 59 moves.

Scoring a performance of 2425 for his 5,5/9, the highly talented 15-year-old Austrian had a fully acceptable result for his first tournament as an IM. He is an ambitious fighter often playing hard for a win on the board, but somewhat vulnerable due to his time spending and the following unpredictable time trouble duels.

16-year-old Southcott-Moyers for sure had mixed feelings after missing the IM-norm chance from a promising position in the fourth hour of his last-round game. 4,5/9 with a performance of 2381, including hard fought draws against four GMs and a win against an IM, still was his by far best result so far. Winning 70 Elo points, he also passed 2300 for the first time and qualified for the FM-title. We expect to hear much more from both these players within the next 2-3 years.



**FM Adharsh K (2317)** and **GM Normunds Miezis (2409)** discussed a Sicilian Maroczy Bind:



13.--- Qf4!? was an elegant way of transporting the queen from c7 over to the kingside, although white kept a slight advantage after 14.Bxc5 bxc5 15.Na4 d6 16.Rad1 Ke7 17.b4. Black got sufficient counterplay as white exchanged the queens with 30.Qxf4. Later the GM exchanged his pawn at a5 for white pawn at c2, and after 36 moves kept a slight initiative with rook, bishop, knight and five pawns on each side.

Miezis at move 37 left a repetition, but under somewhat unclear circumstances lost a pawn a few moves later on. Black however had enough activity to force a rook exchange, and the remaining double minor piece endgame with four against three kingside pawns was a fairly safe draw. Both players following this landed at 5,0/9.

14-year-old Indian FM Adharsh in his first start at Fagernes made solid plus result with performance of 2325, winning five more Elo points. 54-year-old GM Miezis had a shaky start with two won and two lost games, but then a too solid finish with one win and four draws against five lower-rated opponents. Having had 2600 and currently rated above 2400, the colorful Latvian of course cannot be satisfied with a performance of 2320.

**IM Mads Vestby-Ellingsen (2398)** and **FM Rishi Vijayakumar (2317)** discussed a Four Knights opening, in which the players castled short and reached a balanced position after exchanging one set of knights. A draw was agreed with a sensible repetition underway after 16 moves. Vestby-Ellingsen remarkably remained undefeated, but drawing eight games he was too solid and ended up with a disappointing performance of 2335. 13-year-old Vijayakumar continues his strong results from the last six months, and was in the run for an IM-norm until the pairings for round 9. 5,0/9 with a performance of 2389 won him 18 more rating points.

**Morten Andersen (2200)** and **FM Gunnar Lund (2341)** entered a Zukertort opening, leading to a typical hanging pawns position with black pawns at c5 and d5. Black offered a draw after his move 13, hence white stopped the clock instead of making any move 14. The position is well-known from earlier games and considered slightly better for white, much due to his strong fianchetto bishop at b2.

Andersen had a fairly solid tournament, concluding with 4,5/9 and a performance of 2179. This qualifies as a highly respectable result, as Andersen aged 64 now was the oldest player of this field. Our Danish chess friend overall has been rather stable and kept his playing strength well, as he never was above 2300. 22-year-old Gunnar Lund on the other hand is well above 2300, but still a bit unstable. As he was close to an IM-norm in the Norwegian league a few weeks ago, we expected more than a 2250-performance from him now.

**WFM Valentina Verbin (2113)** and **FM Sergey Eliseev (2227)** discussed a Sicilian Najdorf in which black first equalized, and then became too aggressive:



13.--- f5?! 14.h3 Nh6? 15.Bxh6 gxh6 16.exf5 Bxf5 and now 17.Rad1 with the threat of 18.Nxe5 was much better for white. Verbin instead just blundered with 17.Nxe5?? dxe5 18.Qxe5? 0-0 19.Rad1 Qe8 20.Rfe1 Bg5 and black's extra bishop gave him a decisive advantage despite a somewhat open kingside.

17-year-old Eliseev not unpredictably was unpredictable throughout this tournament, with ups and downs in between and in his games. The IM-norm chance went lost with an eight round collapse, but following this turnaround in the last round he still reached 5,0/9 and a performance of 2386 – winning 36 Elo points.

22-year-old Verbin despite the wasted last-round chance made a slight and solid plus result with a performance of 2133. Winning the best woman prize unfortunately was not very difficult as she was the only female player in the GM group, and more competition for that prize will be a top priority goal for our October tournament.

The young lion duel between **FM Evsuld Myagmarsuren (2305)** and **William Alexander Olsen (2188)** started up with the modern Rapport-Jobava attack 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Bf4 e6 4.Nb5 Na6. Complications did not wait long. White first had an initiative, but then ran into counterplay:



9.g4?! Bb4  
10.Qf3?! Nb5  
11.g5 Bxc3+?  
12.bxc3 Qa5  
13.Bxc4  
and now



13.--- dxc4  
14.gxf6 gxf6  
15.Ng4 Qxc3+  
16.Kf1 Qxa1+  
17.Kg2 Qb2  
18.Nxf6+ Ke7  
19.a4 would have left black material up in a rather chaotic position.

The game continuation with 13.--- Qxc3+? 14.Kf1 dxc4 15.gxf6 gxf6 16.Bg5! fxe5? 17.Qf6 gave white a crushing attack.

14-year-old Myagmarsuren for the moment seems to have stabilized around 2300, and following this win reached 4,5/9 with a performance of 2280 – adjusting his Elo from 2305 to 2302. 16-year-old Olsen in his first Fagernes tournament was half a point below expected score with a performance of 2146. It should here be taken into account that he following strong progress from the last six months now had to defend an Elo close to 2200. His 4,0/9 was achieved in a very honest way as won four games and lost the remaining five.

**FM Sondre Melaa (2344)** and **Ben Samuel Groth Skaar (2167)** just had the time to enter a closed Ruy Lopez before white offered and got accepted a draw at move 5.

Melaa came from a strong performance in the Norwegian League and made a promising start with 2/2, but later having 2,0/4 and 3,0/7, he in the end reached 4,0/9 with a disappointing performance of 2269. Following his fast start Melaa had many strong opponents, and until round 7 was in the run for an IM-norm. Skaar struggled to win games and had six draws, but a performance of 2156 was just around expected.

**FM Ethan Pang (2257)** versus **Louis Khoo-Thwe (2118)** saw a Classical Italian attacking race, in which white castled short and black long.



13.Qa4?! g5!? and now 14.Ne5 Nxe5 15.dxe5 Qxe5 16.Bxb6 axb6 17.Nxe4 dxe4 18.Qa8+ Kd7 19.Qxb7 would have been very messy, while the game continuation 14.Nxe4? dxe4 15.Nxg5 Nxd4 16.Bc4 Bxc4 17.Qxc4 Rhg8 soon gave black a decisive attack.

10-year-old Ethan is of course extremely talented, but 3,5/9 and a performance of 2112 was not that much of a disappointment as this was his first long tournament for six months. 14-year-old Khoo-Thwe was considered a lost talent two years ago, but has made a very strong comeback and is close to 2200 following 4,5/9 and a performance of 2263 this week.



**CM Ashwath Kaushik (1958)** and **FM Martin Øksendal (2250)** saw a King's Indian with 4.e3 and 9.e4, leading to a Benoni-like position under fine circumstances for black. A tense struggle followed as both players spent a lot of time between move 15 and 25. White established a passed pawn at d7, while black opened the f-file for a kingside counterattack. White had less time and made more mistakes in a complicated position:



26.b4? Nd7 27.Bxc5 e3 28.Rf1 Rf2! 29.Rxf2 exf2 30.Qxf2 Qxf2+ 31.Bxf2 Rxb5 and black's extra piece won safely in the endgame.

Øksendal was a hot candidate for an IM-norm in our tournament from October last year. This time he never recovered after losing the two first games. He lost no more games and finally reached the 50 % score mark after last round, but 4,5/9 with eight lower-rated opponents still gave a disappointing performance of 2128. Our new Singaporean chessfriend Kaushik is aged only 9, and obviously a great talent. 3,5/9 with a performance of 2013 now was a solid plus result for him, winning back 20 Elo points.



**Aamodt vs Hebbar**

The teenage duel between **Peder Marcus Aamodt (2242)** and **IM Eshaan Hebbar (2175)** started up with an English fianchetto. White got a pleasant advantage following a well-timed 11.d4!?, and his advantage increased as black invited the knight up to d4 by exchanging the pawn. Hebbar did well for the next moves while Aamodt failed to find the best plan(s), and the young American at move 16 turned down a draw offer.

Exchanging the fianchetto bishop for a knight with 19.Bxd5?! left black with an isolated pawn at d5, but black due to his fairly strong pair of bishops was not worse. White however proved able to exchange the dark-squared bishops plus all the rooks, and at move 30 had the better pawn structure plus the better combination of pieces with queen, knight and five pawns against queen, bishop and five pawns. As white succeeded in exchanging the queens at b6 he weakened further the black pawn structure, but black now had the more active king and his bishop in an open position with pawns on both wings was no way inferior to white's knight. Aamodt ran seriously short of time for a few moves around the time control, but had recovered when black at move 43 won a pawn:



43.Ne1! Bxb3?! 44.Nd3+ Kd5 45.Kd2 Bc4 46.Nf2 Ke5 47.Nh3 Kf6 48.f4 and a draw soon was agreed. 13-year-old Hebbar starting up with 0,5/3 made a rather slow start on his first Fagernes tournament, but lost no more games and at 4,0/9 with a performance of 2165 was a fairly normal result. Six draws is a bit misleading as he had many long and somewhat changing games. 18-year-old Aamodt had a slow start, but then did very well with three wins for rounds 4–6 – including a very memorable game against GM Erik Blomqvist. Scoring only one draw for the last three rounds, Aamodt in the end was well below expected score with a performance of 2181. It should however be taken into account that his Elo has increased a lot in the months before this tournament, now giving him a more demanding start point.

**Sivert Schanche Tørfoss (2141)** as white against **CM Andreas Skotheim (2229)** started up with an English fianchetto, but transposed into some kind of Queen's Indian Fianchetto with the black pawn at e7 instead of the usual e6. Black got the chance to exchange a bunch of pieces within the first 18 moves, leaving a drawish rook endgame with seven pawns for each player. Tørfoss offered a draw at move 16 and again at move 25, but Skotheim as the higher rated player continued to play for a full point. It did not work out too well as white after the first time control had a light pressure.

Skotheim however defended well by exchanging all the more pawns, and after 50 moves landed a safe draw with rook and h-pawn versus rook and a-pawn.

15-year-old Tørfoss had a hard-fought tournament with three won and four lost games for the first seven rounds, before slowing down with two draws. A performance of 2167 all taken together was a slight plus result, winning nine new Elo points. Skotheim on the other hand had a fairly solid result with six draws, and always was either at a 50 % score or at -1. Landing at 4,0/9 with a performance of 2211 was a sound result for him.

**Per Fredrik Holand (2070)** and **Kim Roger Hansen Westrum (2193)** today discussed the rare old Paulsen line in a French, starting up with 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nc6 4.e5 f6. Black here came slightly better after exchanging the dark-squared bishops plus one set of knights. White creatively gave up an exchange at move 19, and got about enough compensation as he had one pawn and a strong knight at g5 for the rook. As white after 27 moves had directed his knight to the outpost at d6, black gave up an exchange for the knight and offered a draw – which was accepted. Holand had seven higher rated opponents, and following this his 3,5/8 gave a solid plus result with a performance of 2223. Winning 27 new Elo points he is close to passing the 2100 barrier. Westrum on the other hand only partially recovered following a slow start with 1,0/4, and a performance of 2140 lost 14 Elo points for him.







**Gandrud vs Berget**

**FM Vegar Koi Gandrud (2273)** as white against **Eirik Berget (2041)** got the help needed to reach a reversed Grunfeld exchange line, in which the extra tempo gave white a very strong pressure against the black pawn at d5. In short white won the pawn at move 13, and tactical exchanges within five more moves left white more or less winning in the endgame with rook, knight and six pawns against rook, bishop and five pawns. Berget fought on very

well while Gandrud lost the thread from the start of this endgame, hence black after 30 moves had more or less equalized the chances. The rook endgame with an extra a-pawn after the first time control was a theoretical draw, as black could place his rook in an active position behind the passed a-pawn. The defence still was difficult, and Berget after five hours stumbled in one of the last hurdles:



Here passive defence with 64.--- Kg8 was a fairly safe draw, while the active 64.--- Kf6? lost a second pawn and the game after 65.Rh7! Ra3+ 66.Kf4 Ra4+ 67.Kg3 Kg5 68.Rg7+ Kf6 69.Rg6+. Gandrud had a promising start with two drawn games against GMs, but later had a pole-out tournament until winning a drawish endgame in the last round. A performance of 2195 lost him 18 Elo points. 20-year-old Berget had more within reach in several games, but 3,0/9 with a performance of 2037 still was a decent result in his first GM-group.

**Benjamin Halvorsen (1966)** versus **Kristoffer Wang Strømhaug (2020)** saw a Sicilian Dragon variation transposing to a Maroczy Bind under terms favourable to white, as he after 12.--- Ne5?! 13.Nxe6 fxe6 had both a pair of bishops and the better pawn structure. Under pressure on the board with one hour left on the clock, black here defended too fast and carelessly:



19.--- Nd7? 20.c5! bxc5 21.Bxa6 Rb8 22.Nxe7+! Qxe7 23.Qxd6 and white won back the knight with a big advantage. Black went for a rather desperate piece sacrifice gambling which did not work out – and so his position ran bankrupt within ten more moves. Halvorsen wasted too many chances in the first half of the tournament, including a loss on time in a drawn position. From 1,5/6 he however improved a lot with 2,0/3 in the end, and from his low expected score reached a promising plus result with 4,0/9 and a performance of 2030 – winning 14 Elo points. 17-year-old Strømhaug improved his play from earlier occasions, but still had somewhat unstable results. Following an up in the second last round and a down in the last round, he after all landed on a fairly normal performance with 2009.

**Lars Tormod Haugen (1988)** and **Lukas Dominik Gåsland (1994)** started up with a Sicilian Najdorf duel in which white from the opening had an initiative. Black however came up with enough counterplay in the center to balance the chances. Although having sacrificed a pawn, he was perfectly fine after forcing a queen exchange with 19.--- e5! Later black however allowed the exchange of one of his rooks and wasted time with the other one. Following this white could consolidate his position with a clear advantage in the rook and minor pieces endgame. Haugen unexpectedly chickened out with two minutes against five minutes on the clock, and after 36 moves accepted a draw by repetition. Black had just won back the pawn at d5, but white had all the better pieces and still was clearly better.

51-year-old Haugen spent a bit too much time on the clock and following this wasted some chances, but still danced among the younger wolves and landed on a plus result with 3,5/9 and a performance of 2070. Winning 15 new Elo points he passed 2000. Gåsland had an uphill tournament with two draws and four lost games for the first six rounds. Following a bye half point he however improved with 1,5/2 for the last round, and 2,5/8 here was only very slightly below expected with a performance of 1984.

**Andreas Skrede Hausken (2002)** and **Pantham Kaewpitakkun (2026)** entered a rather open line of a Sicilian Alapin opening. White apparently spent more time than black here, but that was only because he had arrived a quarter delayed. Black offered a draw in a roughly balanced position still within theory after 12 moves; white accepted. Hausken lost his three first games against much higher-rated opponents, but later was fairly solid with 2,5/5 plus a bye half point. The final performance of 1978 was slightly below expected and dropped him just below 2000. Kaewpitakkun aged 16 is the Norwegian junior champion and makes many strong moves. This tournament he also made too many mistakes and 2,5/8 following a slow start gave a disappointing although acceptable performance of 2004.



**Wernberg vs Arvola**

Talented teenagers **Nikolai Olsen Wernberg (1893)** and **Daniel Arvola (2088)** discussed a Zukertort opening more or less transposing into an English fianchetto, in which white due to his knight outpost at d5 kept an edge after exchanging the dark-squared bishops. Black after 21 moves had taken over the initiative, as he had exchanged the knight on d5 for his bishop and placed a knight on the c4 outpost. White was still well in

the game until he blundered with a much too weakening 29.f4?. Arvola used his chances very well in this game, and after 29.--- exf3 e.p. 30.Bxf3 Nc4 31.Rd1 Rce8 32.Kf2? Qh6 33.Bg2 f4 he soon had a crushing attack. 15-year-old Arvola had a hard-fought GM-group debut, winning three games but losing five. The final performance of 2039 was acceptable, but still below expected for a rising young talent. 19-year-old Wernberg qualified for this GM-group by finishing third in the Open last October, and was the lowest rated player of this GM-group. He had many exciting games, but failed to complete some promising positions. 1,5/8 with a performance of 1860 lost a few Elo points.

Finally, on board 32: **Amund Pihl Strand (1914)** and **Victor Lilliehöök (1993)** started up with 1.c4 e6, but soon transposed into a position close to a Queen's Gambit Tarrasch – under circumstances favourable to black, as white had his dark-squared bishop at c1 locked in behind a pawn at e3. The position almost became a reversed Dutch Stonewall as white later went for 11.f4?!, but again circumstances were favourable for black as his pair of knights in such a closed position were superior to white's bishops. The knight at e4 definitely was superior to the white bishop at d2. Sacrificing a piece with 18.Nxc4? dxc4 19.Bxc4 still was loose, but as white had given up another pawn at c3 he apparently had a strong initiative coming up. Lilliehöök however had planned a powerful tactical reply:



24.--- Ba6! 25.e4?! Bc4! and white resigned as 26.Bxc4 Rxc4 27.exd5 Ne2+ 28.Kf1 Rc3! or similarly 26.exd5 Bxc3 27.axb3 Ne2+ followed by 28.--- Rc3 was hopeless.

13-year-old Lilliehöök had some ups and downs, but 3,5/9 with a performance of 2064 in the end was a good result and won him back 27 Elo points.

Strand's collapse in the GM-group, losing all his eight games, was rather shocking following his excellent result when winning the Open one year

ago with 8,0/9. Aged 21 he is obviously still a player of remarkably uneven strength, but hopefully from this tournament gained useful experience with higher-rated opponents.

**IM Erik Hedman (2276)** and **Nikolay Den Roover (2004)** both felt tired and had requested a walk-over loss for last round. 49-year-old Hedman following many long games ended up with 4,0/8 and a slightly disappointing performance of 2234, losing four Elo points. 14-year-old Den Roover made a promising first half of the tournament with 2,0/5, but lost all his three next games and following this ended up with a slightly disappointing performance of 1989.

**Sigurd Kittilsen (2010)** got a bye for the last round, and also had 2,0/8 before that. He in fact made a very strong start with 2,0/4, but later made too many mistakes and lost all his four remaining games. Kittilsen following his low expected score and the strong start remarkably had eight higher rated opponents, with an average Elo 221 points above his own. Following this he, despite losing the four last games, reached a plus result with a performance of 2038. Third rated **GM Gopal Narayanan (2556)** unfortunately had to leave the tournament after starting up with a mediocre 1,5/3. His poor play from round 2 and 3 obviously was affected by the health problem which forced him to withdraw.



## Open Group

The **Open** had a somewhat less dramatic finish, but still saw an exciting five-hour run for the top three prizes. The lead at 6,0/8 before the last round was shared between second rated **Tomas Engkvist (1969)**, third rated **Isai Sivaparan (1944)**, 13th rated **Sondre Stai (1786)** and 16th rated **Christian Neukamm (1776)**. The only other candidates for top three were fifth rated **August Solbu (1887)** and sixth rated **Karim Ali (1876)**.

Attention following this focused on the top three boards. First board saw a young teenager duel between Sivaparan and Engkvist, in which white after two hours had a promising kingside attack coming up. On the second board Stai as white against Neukamm first sacrificed a pawn for loose compensation, but early in the third hour white also in that game apparently had a promising kingside attack.

12 year old Solbu in a tense generation duel on the third board held an initiative against 65 year old Ali, although the position with queen, rook and five pawns on each side after 30 moves appeared drawish. This still became the first top board game to finish:



31.--- Qa8! planning 32.--- Qb8 could have made it very difficult for white to make progress. Instead 31.--- Qa2? 32.Rd8! Rxd8 33.Qxd8+ Kh7 34.Qd3+ won the black pawn at b5. Ali's resignation in this situation came a bit unexpected, although white's two passed pawns combined with his fairly safe king should be decisive in this queen endgame. Solbu following this had reached 6,5/9 and assured himself a place in top three. A tense fight for the top prizes continued with four players at 6,0 still playing against each other.



**Stai vs Neukamm**

White's attack indeed looked dangerous, although black was a pawn up and still had a rescue with 19.--- Nc4! 20.gxh6 Qe5! – leading to approximately balanced chances following a forced queen exchange. The game continuation with 19.--- Kh7? 20.gxh6 gxh6 could have given white a dangerous attack after 21.f4! Nc6 22.Re1 Qf8 23.Qg4. Instead 21.Qf4? Qf6 22.Qe4+ Kg8 was far less clear. White lost the thread with 23.Rh3? Nc5 24.Qh4 – but just in time offered a draw, which black accepted.

With Stai, Solbu and Neukamm all landed at 6,5/9, a winner on the first board would reach unshared first prize – while a losing player in this game would finish fifth at best. Sivaparan as white in a Ruy Lopez had established a big space advantage and a promising h-file attack after 25 moves. He had however struggled to find a breakthrough on the kingside, and black with a knight pair at d3 and f4 apparently had achieved some counterplay after 40 moves. Computers now gave the chances as about equal. The wind however turned again early in the fifth hour:



42.--- b4! now would have left the position highly unclear, as white with a queen at h2 is not threatening anything. Instead 42.--- Rg8? gave white time needed to regroup his army. 43.Qd2! Qa5?! 44.Rh7! Nxg6?! 45.fxg6 Rxxg6 46.Qh2 Bb6 47.Rh8+?! Kf7 48.Rh7+?! Kf8 49.Nf5! Bxe3+ 50.Kf1! g4 51.Rh8+ Rg8 52.Qh7 and black resigned due to mate in two moves.

13-year-old Isai Sivaparan from the Molde chess club following this became the only player to reach 7,0/9 and won the Open group with an unshared first prize. Isai also won the Nordic Championship for players aged under 13 a few months ago and obviously will be a very exciting player to follow for the upcoming years. His start at Fagernes was a little slow following a loss in the second round. Scoring five wins and two draws from the remaining seven games, he in the end still won very well deserved.



**Neukamm, Sivaparan, Stai and Solbu**

32-year-old Sondre Stai also very much deserved his second place. Winning his first five games, he was in the lead until losing to Engkvist in the second last round. Even after 0,5/2 for the final rounds, Stai kept the highest Elo performance with 2059.

August Solbu as the youngest player in top four had a somewhat uneven tournament and apparently was out of it at 3,5/6 – but still reached third place after winning all his remaining three games.



54-year-old Christian Neukamm finished fourth as his Elo performance was notably lower than Solbu, but 6,5/9 with a performance of 1939 still was a great surprise also for himself. Neukamm also won the veteran prize for best player above 50.

Second and third prizes were shared equally between Stai, Solbu and Neukamm, while only Stai and Solbu joined Sivaparan as qualified for the next GM group at Fagernes. Stai notably requalified as he unexpectedly won the Open with 7,0/9 back in 2023, and then had a score of 2,0/9 in his first GM-group test last year. All players in the Open lost at least one game this year. All players in the top four also won at least five games and a lot of Elo: Sivaiparan gained 28 points, Solbu 38, Neukamm 39 and Stai no less than 59!

Having travelled more than 750 kms by car to play this tournament, 20 year old **Thobias Gotaas Hansen (1805)** from Mosjøen after winning his last-round game against **Abishan Arulmaran (1858)** also reached a memorable result with a performance of 1948 – driving home 35 new Elo points. Gotaas Hansen had a somewhat jumpy tournament after winning all his first four games, and in the end reached 6,0/9 in the hard way: Six won and three lost games!

The lower boards in the Open again saw few draws and many hard-fought games, but no really big surprises. Some underrated junior players from the local Innlandet region made notable gains here: 17 year old **Daniel Vollheim (1764)** scored 5,0/9 and won 44 Elo points, while 14 year old **Mikael Ruud (1588)** following a strong spurt reached the same sum of points and won 61 points – more than anyone else in this group.

Top rated **Mikael Aroven (2145)** from Sweden today won a patient win as white in a very Sicilian duel against **Vidar Kopperud (1778)**:



50.Ne3? was a mistake as black now had the chance to exchange the knight with 50.--- Bxe3!, after which the position would have been very drawish. Instead 50.--- Ke6? 51.Nc4 Rc6 52.Na5 Rc7 53.Rb5+ Kf8 54.Qd5+ gave white a winning attack (although black later got some more chances to save the game).



Tenth place at 5,5/9 of course still was a disappointing result for 46-year-old Aroven, which had a score of 7,5/9 when winning the Open in the autumn tournament of 2022.

An unexpected result following the position on the board came on board eight: **Guttorm Andersen (1842)** had a lone rook against rook and two connected pawns against **Mykhailo Kuzmenko (1747)**, when the game had to be declared lost for the Ukrainian veteran – as a mobile phone in his pocket made sound ...



**Final position of Andersen vs Kuzmenko (1-0)**

Obviously Kuzmenko had no intention whatsoever to cheat, and he himself became the only victim of the forgotten phone. The tournament rules still gave the arbiters no alternative but to declare the game lost for him. Kuzmenko apologized for his mistake and immediately accepted the decision. Andersen as a great sportman had a bad conscience for not resigning this endgame earlier on, and tried to suggest that it was declared a draw. It is fairly typical that such a mistake happens in the last round, as Kuzmenko had checked out of his hotel room before the game and no longer could leave his mobile phone there. Still of course it is nowadays the duty of each player not to have electronic equipment available in the playing venue, and the arbiters had reminded the players about this danger also before the last round. Fortunately this time the phone blunder had no unfair consequences for the prizes.

After the top three prizes were decided, the Open still had an exciting run for the best woman prize. **Catherine Jørgensen (1609)** was the favourite with a full point lead in that competition before the last round, but lost a tense rooks and bishop endgame against 70 year old veteran **Roaul Abrahamsson (1920)**.

Top rated woman player **Sara Gilsdottir (1738)** on the other hand miraculously won a lost endgame (which true enough first had been a won endgame) against **Bjørn Dypvik (1686)**. After five hours, Gilsdottir had joined Jørgensen at 4,0/9.

Still this best woman prize was not decided until **Anne Grete Nebell (1561)** after six hours reached a won pawn endgame following a tight battle against **Morten Smedsrud (1699)**. Nebell had a material advantage for the last 82 of the 96 moves in this game, and very well deserved her full point.

Jørgensen had the best rating performance, but the prize was shared between her, Gilsdottir and Nebell, as they all finished on 4 points. The Open had six female players among 39 participants, outclassing the GM-group which had only one out of 68.



**Gilsdottir and Nebell at the prize giving**

Our youngest and lowest rated participant, 10 year old **Liana Wen (1404)** of England, by the way scored an uplifting 2,5/8 and added no less than 32 Elo points.

All our 107 players behaved very well during this tournament. Consequently we hope to meet as many as possible of them again for the next Fagernes tournament – scheduled to start at 17.30 Sunday October 5th 2025!

**Photos by Tom Eriksen**