

Fagernes Chess International 13-20 April 2014

THE LAHLUM ROUND REPORT **7**



Although the first board meeting between GM Evgeny Postny and Gregorz Gajewski was a sound draw, this round overall became a very hard fought one.

As GM Sam Shankland squeezed a win out of a drawish endgame against GM Maxim Turov on the third board, while 19 year old Benjamin Bok decided during mutual time trouble against GM Evgeny Romanov on the second, first place two rounds before the prizegiving is shared between Postny, Bok and Shankland.

The main winner today was still 17 year old Avitar Boruchovsky from Israel, passing the magical ELO-border of 2500 and confirmed his GM-title by winning a long endgame against GM Aloyzas Kveinys!!



Gajewski with black against Postny.

Today's first board meeting between GM Evgeny Postny (2630) and GM Gregorz Gajewski (2631) was a closed Catalan with 4.--- Bb4+. The players toyed around a well known repetition of moves with 11.--- Nh5 12.Bc1 Nhf6 13.Bf4 Nh5 14.Bc1 Nhf6 just after the opening - before white left it to continue playing with 15.Nd3.

Able to realized the c5-break despite the knight on d3,

black soon equalized by sound means. Draw was agreed after 29 moves in a very balanced position with two rooks, bishop, knight and six pawns each side.

This mean Gajewski is still a big shadow man lurking half a point behind the leaders.

While positional Postny is still in the driving seat of this race - but now sharing it with two other GMs.



Bok - Romanov

The second board GM Benjamin Bok (2590) - GM Evgeny Romanov (2642) was a Sicilian Kan in which the c-, d- and e-pawns all were exchanged, leaving a position without any center pawns and a symmetric pawn structure. Usually the pawns in this structure vote overwhelmingly for a draw. In this case circumstances however favored white, as he was about three tempos ahead in a very open

position. Although white made some inaccuracies he played on and kept the initiative all the way. Romanov in a demanding position defended well for a while, but then ran seriously short of time with only six minutes left for 18 moves.

Black got one tactical chance to save himself with 24.--- Bxh3!, but as both players missed that white efficiently transformed the game into a rook and bishop endgame in which white's running a-pawn was decisive. Romanov in the end reached 40 moves without losing on time, but new time on the clock only helped him to realize how hopeless the position at the board was.

Second seeded Romanov can also be counted out of the first prize fight following this highly inconvenient first loss, while Bok after this key game win is sharing first place.

It turns out the earlier round reports underestimated Bok unofficial ELO: Winning about ten points in a Dutch tournament just before this one, he is now at 2615. Whether thus 19 year old will ever fall below 2600 again might be a relevant question.

Following some draws GM Samuel Shankland (2616) today played for a win as white against GM Maxim Turov (2593).

After an early queen exchange, black and his Caro Kann first seemed fine. 22.Rf7!?, temporarily sacrificing a piece by allowing black to take the bishop at d4 with discovered check, was a very flashy and cool move from white.

Still it did not give much of an advantage, and the double rook

endgame three moves later looked drawish at first sight. At second sight white still had the more active rooks and some attacking chances against black's c- and d-pawns. White decided to play on and was rewarded as black apparently overlooked a c-file pin and lost his vital pawn on d5.



Turov black vs Shankland

The following rook endgame seen from the black side of the board was very difficult at best, and Shankland in an inspired mood went on to advance his passed a-pawn and win the game before 50 moves. Usually solid Turov has had a pole out tournament so far. Solid Shankland following this important win shares first place with Bok and Postny – and together with Postny remains the only undefeated player in this tournament.



Boruchovsky - Kveinys

The game between IM Avitol Boruchovsky (2492) and GM Aloyzas Kveinys (2543) started up with a Sicilian O’Kelly line, in which white sacrificed a pawn on e5.

White came slightly better as black refused that challenge and instead went for piece exchanges with 10... Ng4.

Boruchovsky spent about 80 minutes for the first 16 moves, but castled long and played aggressively for a win.

23... a5?! turned out to weaken black’s queenside, after which the c-file intervention and queenside majority gave white a clear advantage with rook, bishop, knight and five pawns on each side. As black became too passive and failed to activate his piece, white’s a pawn decided the rook endgame after five hours.

Patient young Boruchovsky following this could celebrate a very well deserved GM-title, as his ELO now is 2504.6. Curiously a draw in this game should have been just enough, as 2499.6 due to FIDE’s round off rules can be exactly 2500 - but all the more impressive Boruchovsky insisted upon playing for a win to remove all doubt.

As GM-norms are no longer of any practical interest for Boruchovsky, it remains to test whether he from 5.0/7 can fight for a top three prize in the final rounds. Whatever the answer to that question, we are obviously talking about a player you will hear much more about in the future. What more to say about this now? CONGRATULATIONS!



Urkedal black against Elsness.

The second Frode meeting of the tournament saw IM Elsness (2483) playing white against IM Urkedal (2494) in a Queen’s Indian Fianchetto line.

After the fianchetto bishop was exchanged black remained a bit passive white, and white (of course) did not hesitate to establish a space advantage with e4 and d5.

Urkedal playing slow and passive in this game, tried to defend by closing off the centre with f6 and e5 while inviting piece exchanges.

Although white after opening the f-file obviously was in the driving seat, black would have had good drawing chances to hang on if taking back with the king at f8 in move 24.

Instead the automatic 24... Rxf8?? was a decisive blunder as 25.Qe6+! forced a queen exchange under very favorable circumstances for white. White's passed pawn at e6 combined with the d-file later decided within a few moves in the rook and minor piece endgame.

Despite his double puncture in the opening rounds, Elsness at 5.0/7 now still can fight for a GM-norm. But to complete his GM-title at Fagernes this week he still needs 2/2 from now on - and next game he will play black on third board against GM Gajewski.

The game between IM Alexander Donchenko (2471) and IM John Paul Wallace (2402) was the only game between board one and board eight which was drawn today, but at the same time also the wildest of all the games.

Black challenged white's Botvinnik English set up in a radical way with 5... f5!?, the remarkable idea being to sacrifice an exchange at a8 after 6.exf5 Bxf5 7.Bxb7. If white was correct taking the exchange then Bg5-Qd2 for sure was not the right plan afterwards, as black soon got overwhelming compensation.

After white tried to escape by castling long 14... Nc5! (threatening 15... Ncb3+, forking white's Kc1 and Qd2) would have been more or less winning. As black instead played 14... Nf3? white was invited into the game again, but black still kept a strong initiative as white forced himself to return the exchange.

After the queens were exchanged black looked close to winning, as he was a pawn up with the better pieces. Sacrificing an exchange at e5 still looked a bit desperate for white, as black playing with rook, bishop and five pawns against two knights and five pawns had a technically winning position after 30 moves. Still Donchenko's creative counterattack worked out, as black short of time overlooked a tactical d6-break. White's c-pawn following this promoted into a new queen, but as he had to sacrifice both his knights the game was drawn by perpetual check just after 40 moves.

Donchenko following this saved his last chance for a GM-norm, but still needs to win both round eight and nine against very qualified opponents.

Today given the chance to play white against top seeded GM Jon Ludvig Hammer (2647), IM Rasmus Svane (2487) tried to play safe with a 5.Bf4 Queen's Gambit.

After an early queen exchange the position looked about equal and rather drawish. 15.b4? however was an inaccurate move intending a dubious plan, and black demonstrated his strength as he instructively opened the queenside for a decisive c-file intervention. Never given then time to develop his kingside, white stumbled into a depressing rooks and bishop endgame - which turned first lost and then hopeless well before 40 moves.

Hammer can't win this tournament, but from 4.5/7 he might still reach a top three prize after this impressive black win.

Highly talented Svane has been playing too uneven both in between the games and within the games this week, and after this loss must concentrate upon saving his ELO.



Rozentalis holding the draw against Lie.

The eight board IM Espen Lie (2460) - GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2624) was a King's Indian Advance a la French, in which black somehow mixed the set ups when playing a6 and Bd7 followed by f5. White following this got a promising pressure against black's center pawns at c5 and d5. White eventually won a pawn at d5, but still had a hard task to reach winning chances due to the different colored bishops.

Keeping one set of rooks at the board with 26.Be3 probably was the last chance to play for a win, as the bishop endgame after 26.Re3? Rxe3 27.fxe3 turned out to be stone dead draw.

A slightly below average tournament for both players, after they failed to defeat each other in this game. Rozentalis still was in a joyful mood during the evenings open chess lecture – with Lie as one of the interested listeners.

GM Rune Djurhuus (2447) and Sebastian Mihajlov (2197) discussed the Slav opening today. Conclusions on this line was that white regained the pawn at c4, but that black after getting in c5 afterwards was at least equal. As black after 21 moves planted a knight on e4 white replied 22.Bd5?!, overlooking a tactical 22.--- Bxd5! 23.Rxd5 Bg3 with advantage for black. As Mihajlov missed that chance by playing 22.--- Be5?, white after 23.Bxe4 Bxb2 24.Bxh7+ Kxh7 25.Qxb2 instead won a pawn with a clear advantage.

Despite his scattered kingside pawns, white playing two pawns up in the queen and rook position had no problems realizing the win. Djurhuus might still reach an average result if winning the remaining two games, while Mihajlov still has a good result but now must win both his final games to make an IM-norm.



Galinsky escaped with a draw against Hauge.

FM Lars Oskar Hauge (2330) and IM Timofey Galinsky (2427) tested a French Tarrasch with 3.--- Nc6, in which black looked perfectly alright after 11 moves.

Allowed to start a kingside attack with 15.Ng5! white got first a pair of bishops and then the much better pawn structure, as black felt forced to exchange queens at g6. Continuing his kingside attack with an extra pawn white looked close to winning.

Although he turned down several more promising continuations, the endgame with two rooks and three pawns versus rook, bishop and three pawns after 40 moves probably still was winning.

The young FM's technique however was not the very best today, hence the IM escaped into a drawn endgame with bishop and two pawns versus rook and one pawn.
 A good game result but still only an average tournament for Hauge.
 Unpredictable Galinsky as far as I know plays either very promising or somewhat disappointing tournaments, at least in Norway. This one seems to be in the second category.

IM Jovanka Houska (2410) started up with a Queen's Indian fianchetto line and a well known pawn sacrifice at d5 against 13 year old Johannes Haug (2096).



Houska beating Haug.

Winning back the pawn white came somewhat better in a Benoni-like position, in which play circled around white's center pawns at e4 and d5.

Black at move 23 had an interesting possibility to sacrifice a knight upon the center pawns with an active position, but instead passivating himself with 23.--- Na8? he gave white a sound advantage.

Although critical and typical white's e5-break two moves later probably was dubious. It still worked out very well as black first sacrificed an exchange on the e-pawn and then helpfully exchanged down to a lost endgame.

No good game but still a very good tournament for young Haug, still having the chance to make a sensational IM-norm if winning both his final games.

While Houska seems to have recovered completely after the double trouble round.



Getz (white) beating Tari.

The game IM Nicolai Getz (2388) - IM Aryan Tari (2387) got a shocking start, as black in a Sicilian Scheveningen delayed his kingside development too long and then allowed a strong 13.Bd5-sacrifice.

First considering it too dangerous to take the bishop, black in a crumbling cockpit changed his mind later on – and of course ran into a crushing e-file attack.

1-0 after 27 moves – as black after returning the piece now had to pay another piece in rent, and still was under heavy fire.

Getz might well get this game into some book about how to crush Sicilians and/or some book about how to play attacking chess, but Tari's collapse was a chess tragedy after his fine results in the recent rounds.

The game between IM-norm candidates Johan Salomon (2343) and Frode Lillevold (2182) saw another duel in a Ruy Lopez Berlin defence. As white had slightly the better structure and black a pair of bishops this probably was about equal on the board, while both players were slow from opening. Not interested in repairing black's pawn structure by exchanging his knight for a bishop at d6, white instead took some space on the kingside with h4-h5.



Salomon - Lillevold

The rook and bishop endgame with six pawns on each side first appeared drawish, but this changed as black with a thematic f5-break opened up the kingside and started an attack against white's center pawns. Playing very well so far, Lillevold had a winning position with two extra pawns on board after 52 moves. That was - before he at move 53 overlooked a tactical Bxg5! that won back one of the pawns for white.

Black still could have kept the rooks on board and played for a win, but after a few minutes in coma Lillevold exchanged the rooks and offered a draw.

Although scraping a draw in this game Salomon for now is out as an IM-norm candidate.

Lillevold probably should have won this game really to be in that run again. But following a strong draw with black he at age 42 still has made the best tournament in his life (so far) – and still can make a sensational IM-norm out of it if scoring 1.5/2 in the final rounds.

The game between WGM Olga Dolzhikova (2209) and Odd Martin Guttulsrud (2206) was a 3.Bb5+- Sicilian in which white got some space advantage after playing e5.

Black however was never much worse, as he had sound pieces and some queenside counterplay. As both players (of course) spent much time from the opening the game was decided during mutual time pressure, when black picked up the loose white e-pawn and came a sound pawn up with better pieces in a position with queen, bishop and knight on each side.

As both players used their time also after 40 this became the last game of this round, but playing two pawns up in a knight endgame Guttulsrud had control.

20 year old Guttulsrud is still improving and for the first time in this tournament now has a plus result, while Dolzhikova against seems falling after a promising period in the middle of the tournament.

Still eager to get his first IM-norm, Johan-Sebastian Christiansen (2207) today played for a win as black against FM Richard Bjerke (2194).

It all started with a Sicilian Scheveningen line in which white playing e4 and f4 got some space on the kingside, while black with b5 and Nc4 had some counterplay on the queenside. The struggle intensified as white's queens tried to capture black's king, while black's pieces tried to capture the white queen. Some fascinating tactics later white had won two rooks for a queen, but black's octopus knight on e5 combined with chances for a kingside attack still gave him the much easier position to play.

Although running short of time Christiansen just before 40 moves coolly decided the game by picking up all white's three queenside pawns. 0-1 after 46 moves as black was about to lose further material. Bjerke following this again is far below expected score, while Christiansen probably can make an IM-norm if scoring 1.5/2 in the final rounds.



Andersen winning in 18 moves against Djurhuus jr.

On the lower rank of boards Alf Roger Andersen (2230) improved his result further by winning in 18 moves as white against Eivind Djurhuus (1977). This was a Sicilian Grand Prix attack, in which black first delayed his kingside development too much and then ran into a tactical hit at b5 when he searched for counterplay on the queenside.

Peter Flermoen (2232) meanwhile gave himself a lift with a nice attacking game as white against WIM Ellen Hagesæther (2204). After white had played an aggressive set up with e4-d4-f4-d5 from the Pirc opening, black counterattacked with b5xc4 and e6xd5, and after 20 moves dominated the center. White however was in control as his fast running e-pawn combined with the f-file well after 30 moves gave him a crushing attack.

The game between Jo Kristian Løberg (2039) and Ravi Haria (2207) was a rare French line with 3.Nc3 Nc6, which looked equal after both players castled long. While white failed to come up with anything exciting anywhere black started a kingside attack and just before 40 moves won a pawn at f3. After all the kingside pieces left black's extra endgame pawn was a backward e6-pawn, and winning proved too difficult although white played on until nearly 80 moves.

Finally Line Jin Jørgensen (1926) and Sondre Merkesvik (2042) played a sensible 36 moves draw, after black came slightly better from an unusual Grünfeld Indian line.

In case anyone after reading this report misses GM Leif Erlend Johannessen (2530), IM Torbjørn Ringdal Hansen (2469), FM Brede Kvisvik (2300) and/or Arne Hagesæther (2143), the explanation of their absence this round is as follows:

The first two of them requested a walk over draw to go out skiing with their girlfriends, the third requested a walk over draw to go out without skiing and without a girlfriend – and then the fourth had to take a walk over win. Have no worries for anyone of them as no accidents with or without skies have been reported in the Fagernes area, and we have every reason to believe all four will be back for the very exciting eight round.

“Machlik vs Machlik” might sound like a case from some American court in the seventies, but it was in fact was the first board from today’s **Open Norwegian Championship**.

Playing black against his three years older sister Monika in a Slav opening, Endre (1790) went for a greedy line with 3... dxc4. White won back the pawn, but playing with a knight on a2 she afterwards neglected the queenside development too long when playing Nd2-Ne4 instead of Bd2-Nc1-Nb3/Nd3. While the latter plan could have given white an edge, the first plan soon gave black a very promising queenside attack.

As black after getting in c5 became too eager to go on with cxd4 white got her chance for counterplay on the kingside, but used it in the wrong way. 20.Bh6? was a fatal mistake – allowing black to close the kingside with f5 and then again play a winning attack on the queenside.

Although both players made some mistakes black later on was always much better, and helped by Monika’s obligatory time trouble he went on to win decisive material before 40 moves.

Truly playing great chess so far this tournament, Endre after this win passed his sister and now at 6.0/7 shares the lead with another young surprise man.



Laverton- Hølleland

Yes, that means former leader Sigve Hølleland (1871) also hit back with another win as black today. This time true enough a little lucky, as he handling the black pieces against Christian Laverton (2080) was clearly worse from the opening and still slightly worse in a passive position after 20 moves.

But when Laverton fell asleep for an inconvenient moment at move 21, Hølleland immediately used his chance to win an exchange

with a nice tactical Bg5! - and later finished off his depressed looking opponent within seven moves. The young outsiders are still dancing on the top boards as 17 year old Hølleland following this win is sharing first place with 14 year old Endre Machlik at 6.0/7 - ahead of 16 year old Monika Machlik at 5.5/7.

Still dangerous challengers are lining up before the final rounds.

One obviously is the hard hitting and top rated Alexander Flaata (2111), now at 5.0/7 after winning one more a nice attacking as black against Helge Theting (1943).

Black in this Dutch game within 20 moves had a decisive attack against the white king on d1, after white ignored all neon lights marked "danger zone" to snatch a pawn at c7.

Second rated Jens Hjort Kjølberg (2092) true enough is down at 4.5, as he failed to win an endgame with 1-2 extra pawns as white against Henrik Løbersli (1857). (Even the final position actually was close to winning for white in that game. Having only a few minutes left for the game white however took out a repetition of checks without noting the chance to play Rxf5! with a very sound extra pawn.)



Bentsen - Ayzenberg

Fourth seeded Håkon Bentsen (2074) however is a big shadow in the crowd at 5.0/7 after keeping his last pawn and winning a long endgame against Alena Ayzenberg (1929).

Same with two still 13 year old players still doing very well at Fagernes: Arman Ghaderi (1843) completed his attack in the endgame after winning a pawn in the opening against still too uneven Willy Kristiansen (2017), while Trygve Dahl (1867) increased his

ELO account even further as he gradually turned a difficult middle game into a won endgame convincing as black against our seventh seeded French guest David Maloberti (2048).

A capable player also steaming upwards towards the end of the tournament is Kristiansand player Terje Torgersen (1970), today winning first the queenside and then the endgame as black against Karl Juriloo ((1718)).

Not to forget: Three Machliks on the top ten boards tomorrow, as Edit (1913) from an apparently balanced position today demonstrated a winning attack against Abyl Kizatbay ((1144)).

Today's most flashy combination in this group was made by 70 year old Vidar Taksrud (2052) in an overall entertaining game against Erling Skjelstad (1667). Taksrud neatly finished it off by sacrificing an exchange at f6, with the idea of leaving his old queen hanging on e5 to let the new queen decide the game from d8.

In short: No price is decided in the Open either, and we look forward to more exciting chess in the eight round.

New top board pairings will be Hølleland - Bentsen, E. Machlik – Laverton, Torgersen – M.Machlik and Flaata - Ghaderi.