

European Schools Chess Championship

Report 4/5

G7

Bank Holiday Monday saw a double-header across many of the sections, and with that pushing us beyond the half-way mark, things are starting to clear up. In the Girls' Under 7s for example, where there were 5 players jointly in the lead after round 3, today's there's just two players leading the way. Kumsal Islek wasted no time in setting out her title credentials against Bjork Munoz Hardardottir - a Petroff's went badly wrong for Bjork, and Kumsal delivered a knight checkmate on move 8.

Top seed Maria-loana had a much longer game - 85 moves in fact, though it was over long before that; certainly from when Maria-loana queened in successive moves, losing both queens immediately but forcing her opponent to give up her rook, and enter a trivial R+P v K ending. That said, while it was a long game, it was also a quick one, and Maria-loana ended up with five minutes *more* on her clock than she started with!

Miray Akinci was the third player to make it to 3/4, but in round 5 she found herself up against Maria-loana. In a game of two tactics, Miray forked knight and queen to go a piece up, but then defended a rook with a knight - when Maria-loana took the knight, there was nothing defending the rook. Material equality was restored, but Miray's king was far more open and though the computer called the position level, it was far easier for white to play, and indeed Miray was soon in big trouble, and soon after was lost.

Kumsal is the only other player on 4/5 after mating the previously-unbeaten Ingibjorg Loa Hedinsdottir in 11 moves in the afternoon game - a grand total of 19 moves played today for a very efficient 2/2! And at the other end, two of the three winless players got off the mark - Birta Augustudottir in the last derby of the section against Audur Freysdottir, and Aarvi Bharadwaj against another of the Icelandic contingent Bjork Munoz Hardardottir.

So it looks now like it's between Kumsal, Maria-loana and Miray for the title. With the derbies out of the way, most of the non-Icelandic players will now spend the rest of the tournament playing Icelandic players, and tie-breaks could yet feature.

O7

The open under 7's saw only one round today as it is a 7-round swiss. In the battle for the lead Omer Taha Dede came out with a win against Amandeep Singh for a perfect score of

4/4. Trailing one point behind are Yan Katsarski of Bulgaria and David-Christian Talaba of Romania.

In the top game Amandeep developed his king thinking that it would be safe as the queens had already been exchanged and Omer demonstrated well how two minor pieces and two rooks are easily enough to cause significant bother for the king.

G9

It's tight at the top in the Girls' U9 section, with Anne-Sophie joining Irmak Keser at the top with a bit of thanks to her fellow Romanian, Melania-Cristina Grigore.

In round 4, Anne-Sophie got a lovely French position against Khushi Maddu of Ireland - major pieces bearing down the open f-file and a bishop eyeing f2 as well. When Anne-Sophie won a piece, there was no way back for Khushi. Irmak kept her 100% record with a crushing win over Aria Bjork Danielsdottir, and with Poland's Helena Taradajko unfortunately hanging back-rank mate against Eslem Tolan of Turkey, it meant a gap of one point had opened up between those two in third and Anne-Sophie in second.

In the afternoon session, Anne-Sophie picked up early material against Aria Bjork Danielsdottir, but the game provided an interesting early position. Here, white appears to have won the rook on a8. How should black continue?



The rook is gone - but if black continues 1...Nbd7!?, white would want to think twice before continuing 2.BxR QxR because of white's light-square weaknesses. In fact, the engine scores 2.BxR and 2.Bg2 as about the same, so maybe white should take the safe option and retreat an easy pawn up - but black still has her rook. Instead after 1...Nc6, white took the rook and the game was gone.

That took her to 4½/5 - and she then received a big boost when Melania-Cristina Grigore - with just a solitary draw in the tournament to date - held Irmak to a draw. Indeed, she had the better of the game even after losing an exchange, and only a hasty pawn-push - she was forking king and rook, but overlooked that her opponent's last move had removed the defending pawn - stopped her from taking the full point.

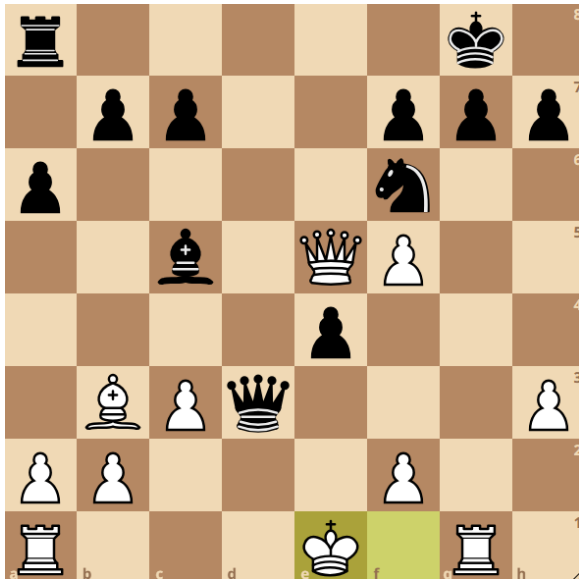
So they're now both on 4/5, and that final-round meeting is looking more and more interesting! Eslem Tolan is hanging on in there on 3½/5, having already lost to Irmak, but

she plays Anne-Sophie in round 7 and even if she doesn't win the tournament, she may yet have a big say in who does.

O9

Unlike some of the other younger age groups, the Under 9s isn't a round-robin, but a proper Swiss, so it means the games get tougher at the top as we go on. As a result, Ata Peray no longer holds a 100% record, though he is still in a share of the lead despite two draws today.

He took an early draw against Lucas Zheng of Wales in the morning session, but missed a clear win against Efe Aynoglu in the afternoon. Black to play and win here?



1...e3 does it - white can't stop both 2...Qd2+ / Qf2# and 2...ef# without ruinous loss of material. The key line is 2.fe when Re8 decides; now that black's pawn is gone from the e-file, the white king is a lot more open.

So both players move to 4/5, and are joined by Aaron-Mathias Dragoi of Romania, storming back up the standings after losing his opening game. He beat Lucas Zheng in round 5 in a game which was drifting towards an uneventful draw before, in a knight and pawn ending, Lucas lost a key pawn. But he didn't need to - how should white continue here?

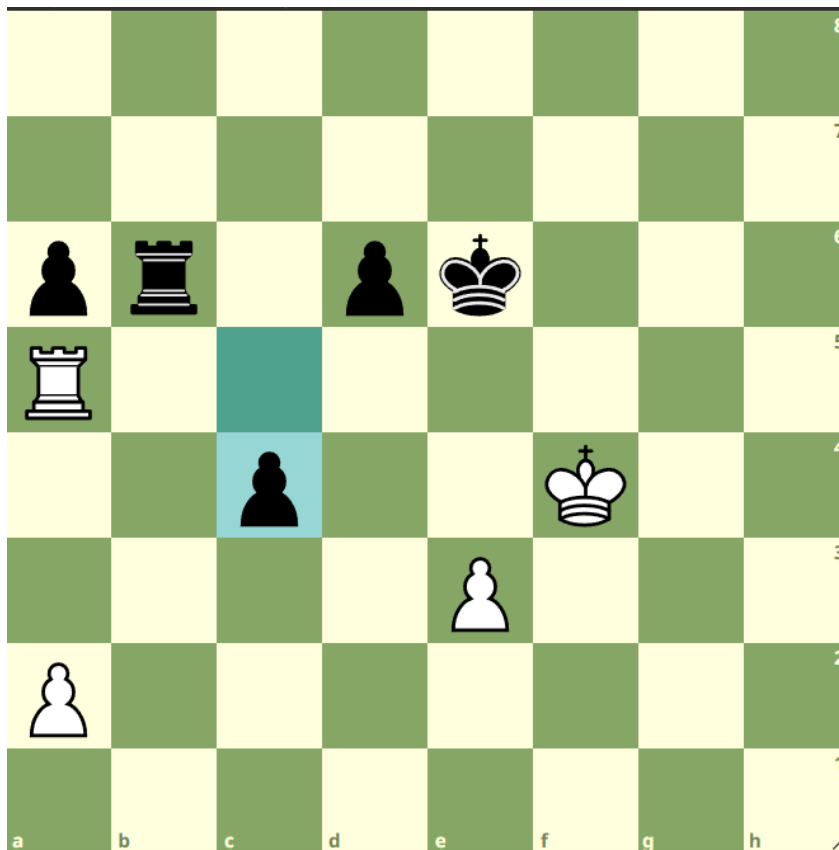


It looks like c3 is dead, and after the game continuation 1.c4?? dc 2.dc Nc5, the a-pawn is gone instead, and black has an outside passed pawn to distract white with. But white could have played 1.Ke2! and after 1...Nxc3 2.Kd3 and the d5 pawn is going to fall.

Interestingly, after round 4, the 11 rated players were all in the top 12 and 7 of the 8 unrated players propped up the table. The rated players are all well-matched though - 130 points between 2nd and 10th seeds - so the games at the top are going to be tight from here on in and we can expect plenty of twists in the last four rounds. Onur Hisir of Turkey and Ayaansh Mulutkla of Ireland are on $3\frac{1}{2}/5$, and tomorrow's sixth round sees Efe and Aaron-Mathias on top board, while derbies on 2 and 3 see Ata play Onur while Ayaansh plays Krish Bhattacharjee, one of five players on $3/5$

G11

In the girls under 11 Zeynep Sonmez of Turkey maintained her perfect score defeating Neher Kesir of Turkey and Lorena Putar of Ireland. She has a full point lead against her closest competition, Ester Galmidi of Israel and Elif Deniz of Turkey.



In this position Emma Cretescu playing the white pieces had only 42 seconds to find the one move that draws the position.

1. Ke4 is the move preventing blacks king from advancing. From there the white king can blockade the c-pawn and maintain a draw.

O11

It was a good day for Ege Oz (Turkey) in the open under 11's as he scored 1.5/2 from the two rounds beating Konstantinos Ioannidis (Greece) and drawing to Ali Poyraz Uzdemir (Turkey). There were five boards in a row that contained only Irish players playing against each other in round 5. At the end of day Ege Oz was the tournament leader with 4.5/5 with four players running on his tail with 4/5

G13

No double-header in the Girls' Under 13, but Zumral Yazici had a big win against one of her closest rivals, Ipek Dogan to stay on a 100% score, but with one one player left within half a point of her. She was given wonky kingside pawns early on, which gave white a solid edge out of the opening, but she outplayed her opponent after that, and when the time came for tactics, she was fully alert. Black to play here?

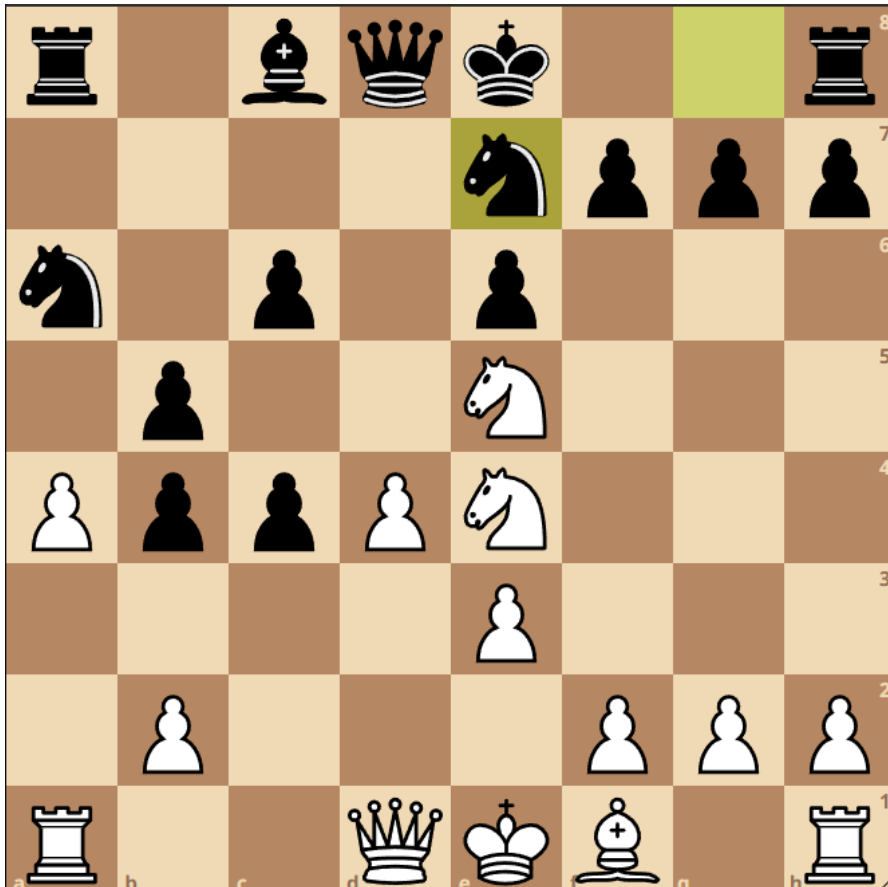


1...Rxc2! does the job; the king can't recapture as Rg8+ leads to mate, and without the g-pawn, white's king is dangerously exposed; black never looked back.

Cagla Yudum Sahin is the only player with half a point of the top now, after a nice win with black where by move 20, she had three minor pieces and a queen swarming around her opponent's king; destructive tactics weren't long in coming. From there, it's a point further back to the pack - Ipek Dogan, Kayla Nil Zeybek and Romania's Iulia Elena Isopescu

O13

The day began with two clear leaders of the tournament, Gorkem Unsal and Rock Yu, and ended with the tournament being blown right open as both of them took losses in the second round of the day. This means that as the long day concluded four people were on 4/5 and another four were only half a point behind them on 3.5/5. The section is very much all the play for.



This position which occurred in a Turkish derby between Ali Celik and Umut Dugan. White has a more active position and is able to target blacks Queenside. What can white do to dismantle the blacks pawns?

1.Nxc6 would've been the most effective way for White to dismantle the black Queenside and open up the black king as after 1...Nxc6 2.axb5

G15

The girls under 15 section only had 1 round today as the section only has 7 players but that didn't mean we didn't get some very entertaining games. Pelin Sayhan and Eylul Ceren Gedik were joined first with 2/3 and both won to go join first on 3/4. Sayhan's win was particularly impressive and on move 28 after white (Maria-Antonia Aldea) went wrong with 28. Qxb7 she took her chance with Qd2 with a decisive attack. The game continued 29.Rg1 Qxf4+ 30. Kh1 Bxg4!, a nice tactic she found that all but confirms the win. White can play 31. hxg4 as it hangs Qh6+ which wins for black.



O15

Turkish player, Efe Yalcinkaya's flawless record ended in round 4 with a draw on board 1, although with the next 2 boards also being a draw they remain in clear first. The top 2 boards were both played to an extremely high level, really emphasising the calibre of the tournament.

Going into round 5 Efe Yalcinkaya, was half a point clear and accepted a quick draw vs fellow countryman, Alper Demirtas, to leave open it up to give a lot of players a chance to catch up to them on 4/5. Egehan Yildiz took that opportunity on board 2 as well as FM Gustas Morkunas, Hayri Beyhun Senel and George Stack on board 3,4,5. Move 23 in FM Morkunas's game caught my eye. The position seems basic, white is clearly better although a plan is difficult to find. A lot of weaker players would try force matters with moves like 23. Ra8 swapping off the rooks leaving white in a favourable Queen and Bishop endgame although this isn't accurate. FM Morkunas showed his class with a slower, more strategic and positional approach electing to improve his pieces before forcing matters as black is practically in zugzwang with no obvious moves or plan. FM Morkunas played 23. g3 followed by g6 24. h4 h5 25. Kg2 now black really struggles to find moves and their position collapsed quickly. Very mature play from white.



With 4 rounds to go there's a 5 way tie for 1st with a lot to play for.











G17

The top seed in this section is Ireland's Lara Putar, pictured below, and she has a bit of catching up to do, after losing her first round game to Hatice Asli Matsu.



Today she faced Elisa-Andreea Dumitrache of Roumina and she won, the game can be seen [here](#). Meanwhile, at the top, Maria Krzysztynska (1481) of Poland took the lead in this round, reaching the maximum score of 4/4. With no one on 3.½ that's quite a lead for the 8th seed from 10, she's obviously under-rated.

















The pairings for round 5, which began at 3pm today, can be seen below.

Round 5 on 2024/06/03 at 15:00									
Bo. No.	Rtg		Name	Result	Name		Rtg	No.	
9	3	0	 Sinkevich, Maryia		Engel, Ecrin Tuana		1576	10	
10	4	1557	 Souralova, Jana		Mustu, Hatice Asli		1925	2	
11	5	1692	 Dumitrache, Elisa-Andreea	WCM	Buyuk, Ecrin Efsa		1891	1	
12	6	1461	 Toculet, Erika-Andreea		Putar, Lara		1983	9	
13	7	1837	 Fileru, Maria		Krzysztynska, Maria		1481	8	

Can Maria increase her lead with a win with the black pieces against Maria Fileru of Roumina?

O17

The all IM clash on board 1 ending in a quick "IM" draw and this opened the way for a few other players to try to narrow the gap at the top.

Round 4 on 2024/06/03 at 10:00									
Bo. No.		Name	Rtg	Pts.	Result	Pts.	Name	Rtg	No.
1	2	 IM Kilic, Eray	2433	2½	3	IM Tarhan, Adar	2457		1
2	8	 Yildiz, Yunus	1883	2	2½	Yilmaz, Kerem Tuna	2039		5
3	4	 Topuz, Mirac Melih	2065	2	2	Sheahan, Ben	2080		3
4	11	 Comley, Jamie	0	1½	2	Ulian, Andrei-Octavian	1896		7
5	9	 Devine, Luca	1414	1	1½	Loos, Ejnar-Enki	0		16
6	6	 Starosciak, Szymon	1983	1	1	Crkon, Oliver	0		12
7	13	 Grzelecka, Zuzanna	0	1	1	Hohenschurz, Eric	0		14
8	15	 Karlova, Fabian	0	0	0	Adam, Benno	0		10

In particular, a win for Kerem Tuna Yilmaz on board 2 would propel him to jointly lead the event and this he certainly tried to do.



Kerem Tuna Yilmaz (2039) from Turkey pictured during his round 4 game, which unfortunately for him, was a draw.

The full pairings for round 5 can be seen [here](#). The top two boards were all occupied by players from Turkey, the federation that sent the most players to this event by far. Board 3 featured Roumina vs Germany while board 4 was an all Irish clash.