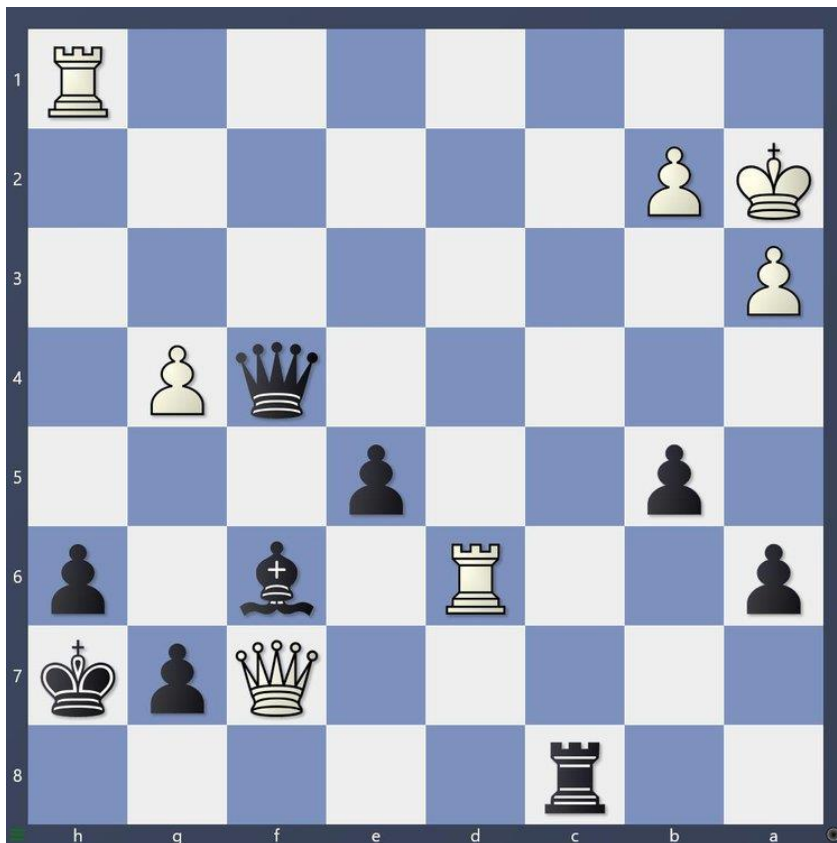


The 3rd “Qualiturnier” tournament took place on the last weekend of January in Winterthur. Several SMCA students participated in this event, in order to try and qualify for the finals of the Swiss Youth Championship. Let us share some highlights from this event.

For the second time after Bettingen in December, SMCA provided its players with a coach on site. Many thanks to IM Anthony Petkidis for his help in both preparation and post-game analysis.



This picture, kindly provided by Silke Gade-Stapelkamp, shows Anthony analyzing with Niels Gade after his victory in the 5th round. The player from Bern had a great tournament in the U14 category and finished shared 6th with 5 points out of 7. Here is the end of the game mentioned above against Marc Scherer:



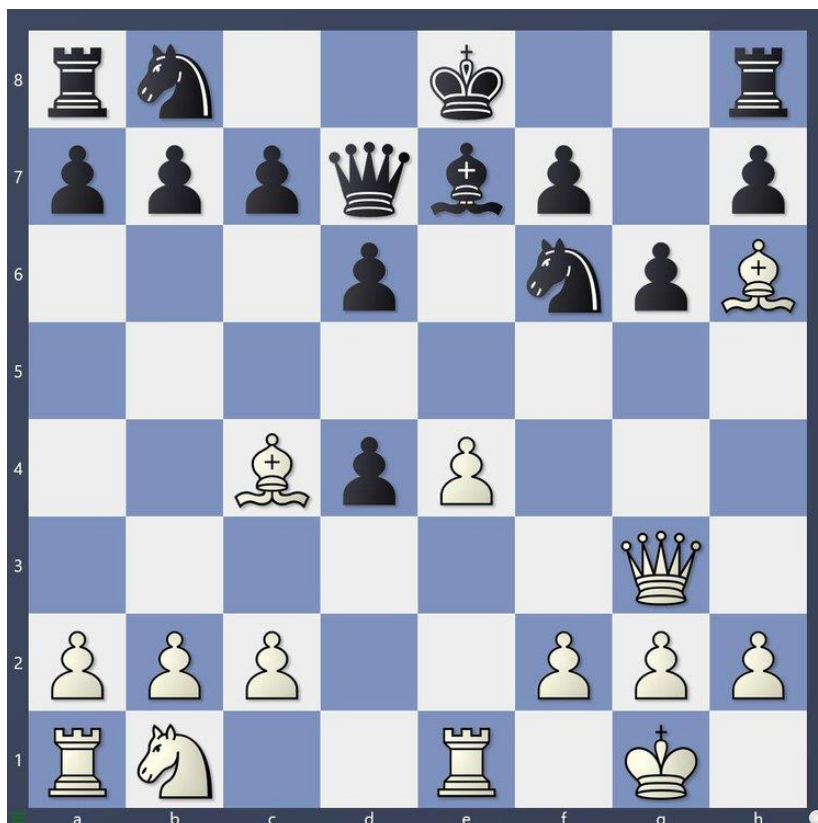
Niels as Black pushed his passed pawn with **35...e4!** to open both diagonals for his Queen and Bishop. White unfortunately blundered his R_{d6} with **36.Re1?** After 36.Rxa6 Re2, the outcome would be totally open in this complicated position.

7-year-old Sahasra Aragonda stunned the field in the U10 category by finishing second with 6 points! This wonderful result secures her place in the final, that will take place in May.



Winner Marco Wilhelm in the center, with Sahasra on his right, and Benedek Csonka in the 3rd place.

Here is the decisive moment of her last-round victory against Mateo Paquette.



Black's King is stuck in the center, but if Nc6 can follow, Black will be ready to castle long. Sahasra Aragonda does not give him the time to achieve that: **10.Qb3!** with a double attack on f7 and b7. After **10...Nc6 11.Bxf7+ Kd8 12.Bg7**, she won the exchange and soon the game.

In his first appearance in a “Qualiturnier” this season, Flavio Rotunno confidently cruised through the tournament and earned the first place alone with 6 out of 7. The player from Fribourg has just started training on individual basis with GM Yannick Pelletier. This possibly gave him a boost for this important event. In round 4, the first classical game of the tournament, Flavio convincingly beat second seed Julius Scherler.



Playing with Black, he gathered a lot of pieces towards the critical point c4. The moment is already ripe for a small combination: **20...Naxc4! 21.Nxc4 Rxd1+ 22.Qxd1 Bxc4**. Being a pawn up, Flavio did not look back and scored the win on move 35.

The fourth and last “Qualiturnier” will take place at the end of March in Payerne. All players qualified will then gather at the end of May in the finals of the Swiss Championships. We are looking forward to fascinating battles!

Your SMCA Team