

Young Magnus Carlsen's first steps in closed tournaments  
**9 Gausdal Classics (GM & IM Invitational) 2001 – 2008 and  
1 Drammen Smartfish Intern. Invitation Tournament 2004/05**



10-year-old Magnus' debut at Gausdal Classics, in the IM-group A, in April 2001 (Photo: Organiser).  
Second picture from the same event: Carlsen vs. IM Hole 0-1, Gausdal Classics 2001, IM-group A

➔ Replay the game: [Magnus Carlsen vs Oystein Hole \(2001\) \(chessgames.com\)](https://chessgames.com/game/magnus-carlsen-vs-oystein-hole-2001.html)

**Gausdal Classics, 2001 – 2008** in Gausdal, Norway (GM + IM group(s), two editions in 2003!! Open in Gausdal since 1970, eg. **Troll Masters**, **Peer Gynt**, **Eikrem Memorial**, and **Arnold Cup**

The Gausdal Chess Festival was founded by the norwegian player and organizer **Arnold J. Eikrem** (1932 – 1996). In the beginning of this century, historian, politician, crime writer and master player, **Hans Olav Lahlum**, started out to relaunch the **Gausdal Festivals** with a fresh and original style of organizing chess tournaments. The eccentric multi-talent proved to be dedicated and passionate about his **Gausdal Classics invitational series** highlighted here.



Hans Olav Lahlum and a young Magnus Carlsen in Gausdal. Lahlum made a lot for the that kid 😊


Magnus Carlsen had his entry in an invitation tournament at the international level in a closed IM-group of Gausdal Classics in April of 2001, when **Hans Olav Lahlum** decided to invite him despite being unknown in the chess world at that time with an ELO rating of just 2064!

**Carlsen played in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and won the Gausdal Classics in 2007.**

<http://www.bergensjakk.no/gausdal/kausdal2001> (Début Gausdal Classics Masters, three groups: one GM-group and two IM-groups, child prodigy Magnus Carlsen playing in the closed IM-group A)  
<http://www.bergensjakk.no/gausdal/kausdal2002> (on 8th place (GM-group): Carlsen, ELO of 2163)  
<http://www.bergensjakk.no/gausdal/kausdal2003> (Carlsen coming in co-last in the GM-group)  
<http://www.bergensjakk.no/gausdal/kausdal2003-2> (second closed Gausdal in the same year 2003)  
<http://www.bergensjakk.no/gausdal/kausdal2004> (on 5th place: Carlsen with highest ELO rating)  
<http://www.bergensjakk.no/gausdal/kausdal2005> (on 7th place: Carlsen still waiting for the triumph)  
<http://theweekinchess.com/html/twic599.html#7> (in the year 2006 without Magnus Carlsen)  
<http://www.bergensjakk.no/gausdal/classics2007> (clear first at the tender age of 16½: Carlsen)  
<http://en.chessbase.com/post/greg-kaidanov-wins-gausdal-claic> (Dernière closed GM edition)



## Gausdal Classics (GM-A Invitational) 2001 – 2008

Year	Winner	Country	Points
2001	<b>Ralf Åkesson</b>	Sweden	<b>8 / 9</b>
2002	<b>Kaido Kulaots</b> on tie-break, <b>Kjetil A. Lie</b> (IM-norm), and <b>Vasilios Kotronias</b> (then Cyp)	Estonia	<b>6.5 / 9</b>
2003 I (April)	<b>Nick de Firmian</b>	USA	<b>7.5 / 11</b>
2003 II (October)	<b>Kaido Kulaots</b> (second win)	Estonia	<b>9.5 / 11</b>
2004	<b>Erwin L'Ami</b> (as IM, making a GM norm)  L'Ami at Amsterdam in 2005. The new GM Erwin L'Ami, just minutes after completing the norm. Photo by Frits Agterdenbos	Netherlands	<b>6.5 / 9</b>
2005	<b>Sergei Tiviakov</b>	Netherlands	<b>8.5 / 9 (!)</b>
2006	<b>Eduardas Rozentalis</b>	Lithuania	<b>6 / 9</b>
2007	<b>Magnus Carlsen</b> (2.-4. Rozentalis, Krasenkow, and legendary Lajos Portisch)	Norway	<b>7 / 9</b>
2008	<b>Gregory Kaidanov</b> (2. Gopal, 3. Kotronias)	USA	<b>6.5 / 9</b>

<http://www.ajedrezdeataque.com/05%20Palmares/Torneos/Europa/Gausdal.htm>

**Record winner: Kaido Kulaots (2x)**

**Further winners:** Åkesson, de Firmian, L'Ami, Tiviakov, Rozentalis, Carlsen, Kaidanov

**Prominent players not winning:** *Romanishin, Dreev, Korneev, Jones, Williams, Westerinen, Berg, Sandipan, Macieja, Halkias, Krush, Pähtz, and bracketed Portisch, Krasenkow, Gopal*







Kaido Kulaots, double winner at closed Gausdal GMT, multiple Estonian Champion, and shocking winner at the the strong Aeroflot Open in 2019 in Moscow.



Kulaots, Kaido. Photos: Rauno Volmar, Delfi Sport, [www.delfi.ee](http://www.delfi.ee).

GM Kaido Kulaots started with 8.5/9 in the Gausdal October 2003 edition before calming down with two closing draws. He is a friend of the Carlsens. In Gausdal January 2000, he and the Carlsens shared a cabin and on the way back to Estonia he spent a night in their Lommedalen home. He borrowed the room of the eldest Carlsen daughter, and the family jokes that he was the first GM in Ellen's bed.

Anecdote from the book «Wonderboy» on Magnus Carlsen» by Simen Agdestein.

		Kulaots, Kaido		points	
GM 2542		39		7/9	
vs					
1		GM Maghsoodloo, Parham	2666	●	1
2		GM Grachev, Boris	2626	○	½
3		GM Firouzja, Alireza	2618	●	1
4		GM Martirosyan, Haik M.	2616	○	½
5		GM Dubov, Daniil	2703	●	1
6		GM Chigaev, Maksim	2613	○	½
7		GM Wei, Yi	2733	●	1
8		GM Sasikiran, Krishnan	2678	●	½
9		GM Khismatullin, Denis	2621	○	1

- winning Aeroflot unbeaten as a 2542 with 7/9 and 2872 performance.
- beating Maghsoodloo, Firouzja, Dubov and Wei Yi with black during one tournament.



**Magnus Carlsen** @MagnusCarlsen

Congrats to Kaido Kulaots for an absolutely amazing underdog victory at the Aeroflot Open! 19 years ago, he shared a flat with my father and I at the Gausdal tournament, and inspired an unrated 9 year old by predicting that he would one day be rated 2650  
8:39 PM - Feb 27, 2019

<https://chess24.com/en/read/news/kaido-kulaots-defies-the-odds-to-win-aeroflot-open>



**Sam Shankland** @GMShanky

Age is just a number, and rating is just a number. Congrats to Kaido Kulaots (42 y/o, 2542 FIDE) on the biggest upset tournament win I have ever seen! Winning the Aeroflot A group as the 62nd seed ahead of 6 2700+ guys is no joke.

7:39 PM - Feb 27, 2019

Kaido broke through to claim the biggest win of his career.

The top tournament of the Aeroflot Open is famously tough, and the 17th edition was no exception. It featured six 2700 players, 33 of 2600 Elo and a host of ferociously talented youngsters. Kaido Kulaots' current rating of 2542 is in fact slightly below the default 2550 cut-off point for participants.

Vladimir Kramnik recently announced his retirement at the age of 43, but today Kaido Kulaots celebrates his 43rd birthday after winning the 2019 Aeroflot Open and qualifying for his first ever classical supertournament - the Sparkassen Chess Meeting in Dortmund later the year 2019. No-one could have predicted victory for the 2542-rated 62nd seed, but it was a richly deserved triumph after the 8-time Estonian Champion beat young stars Maghsoodloo, Firouzja, Dubov and Wei Yi with the black pieces. 18-year-old Haik Martirosyan took second on tiebreaks, with Krishnan Sasikiran third.

by [Colin McGourty](#), chess24





Nick de Firmian, clear first at Gausdal Classics in 2003 (April). Photo: Peter Bolt



Gregory Kaidanov, clear first at Gausdal Classics in 2008. Photo from CCSCSL, Saint Louis

# Drammen Smartfish Intern. Invitation Tournament 2004/05

In 2004/05, Lahlum also organised the **Drammen Smartfish Chess Masters** at Drammen, Norway, this was the first big international invitation tournament for GM Magnus Carlsen.

## Smartfish Masters 2004

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0		
1	Shirov,A	2726	-19	*	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	0	1	6.0 / 9	26.00
2	Nielsen,PH	2663	+50	½	*	½	1	½	1	½	½	1	½	6.0 / 9	25.50
3	McShane,L	2629	+46	½	½	*	½	½	0	1	1	½	1	5.5 / 9	
4	Lie,K	2474	+139	½	0	½	*	1	1	½	½	½	0	4.5 / 9	20.25
5	Korchnoi,V	2601	-1	0	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	1	4.5 / 9	18.00
6	Maciej,B	2613	-14	0	0	1	0	½	*	½	½	1	1	4.5 / 9	17.75
7	Khalifman,A	2669	-115	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	4.0 / 9	17.75
8	Johannessen,LE	2519	+51	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	*	1	½	4.0 / 9	16.25
9	Carlsen,M	2581	-99	1	0	½	½	0	0	½	0	*	½	3.0 / 9	14.50
10	Stefanova,A	2523	-35	0	½	0	1	0	0	½	½	½	*	3.0 / 9	13.00

Average Elo: 2599 <=> Cat: 14 gm = 4.77 m = 2.97



Photo: Organiser / Rune Elven

Carlsen, already a Grandmaster, sensationally beat Shirov, then a top ten player, drew the reigning Women's World Champion, GM Antoaneta Stefanova, but lost his game to 'Grandfather' Korchnoi: <https://en.chessbase.com/post/shirov-nielsen-win-drammen/6>

Aug-29-16 **diagonal**: Handshake GM Stefanova and GM Carlsen (scroll down): <http://es.chessbase.com/post/drammen-carlsen-derrota-a-shirov>.



Highlight for Stefanova, an entry in an elite closed round robin tournament, at Drammen, Norway (SmartFish Masters), year-end 2004/2005: [SmartFish Chess Masters \(2004\)](#). She scored 3/9, sharing places with young Carlsen. Peter Heine Nielsen and top-seeded top ten player Alexei Shirov won at 6/9. Khalifman, seeded as number two, disappointed, eight draws and one loss.

Carlsen beat Shirov, Shirov beat Korchnoi, Korchnoi beat Carlsen.

An international invitation tournament not only based on Elo and category average with almost always the same top ten players, but also on the Narrative: ages, gender, different styles (don't mention Khalifman), and promising players from the hosting nation. **Chess careers can again have a narrative and all sports need this.**





Korchnoi vs. Carlsen at Drammen Smartfish 2004/05. Source: Aggelos Kesaris blogspot.

## Victor Korchnoi vs. Magnus Carlsen - A Rare Cross-Generational Battle

Game with Comment from [agadmator's Chess Channel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcGskIvAQYM) by [#agadmator](#):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcGskIvAQYM>



Viktor with the White pieces, on move 11: Nx4! (left: earlier photo from the mid-1980s)

Viktor Korchnoi vs Magnus Carlsen 1-0 "**Father Time and Baby New Year**" (Chessgames Game of the Day), Smartfish Chess Masters (2004/05), Drammen, NOR, rd 3, Dec-29, 2004. GM Korchnoi had a 2601 Elo rating, GM Carlsen a 2581 Elo rating. Korchnoi has beaten nine undisputed World Champions in classical chess (all from Botvinnik to Kasparov, and Carlsen).

➔ Replay: <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1326963>





Stefanova: Women's World Chess Champion 2004-2006, number 2 ranked woman in January, April, July 2003 behind Judit Polgar (then quarterly published ELO lists). In 1992, Stefanova played at the age of 13 in her first Chess Olympiad in Manila. At Drammen Smartfish International Invitation she scored three points (+1=4-4). Majestic picture: [http://files.chessblog.com/uploaded\\_images/Stefanova-721368.jpg](http://files.chessblog.com/uploaded_images/Stefanova-721368.jpg)