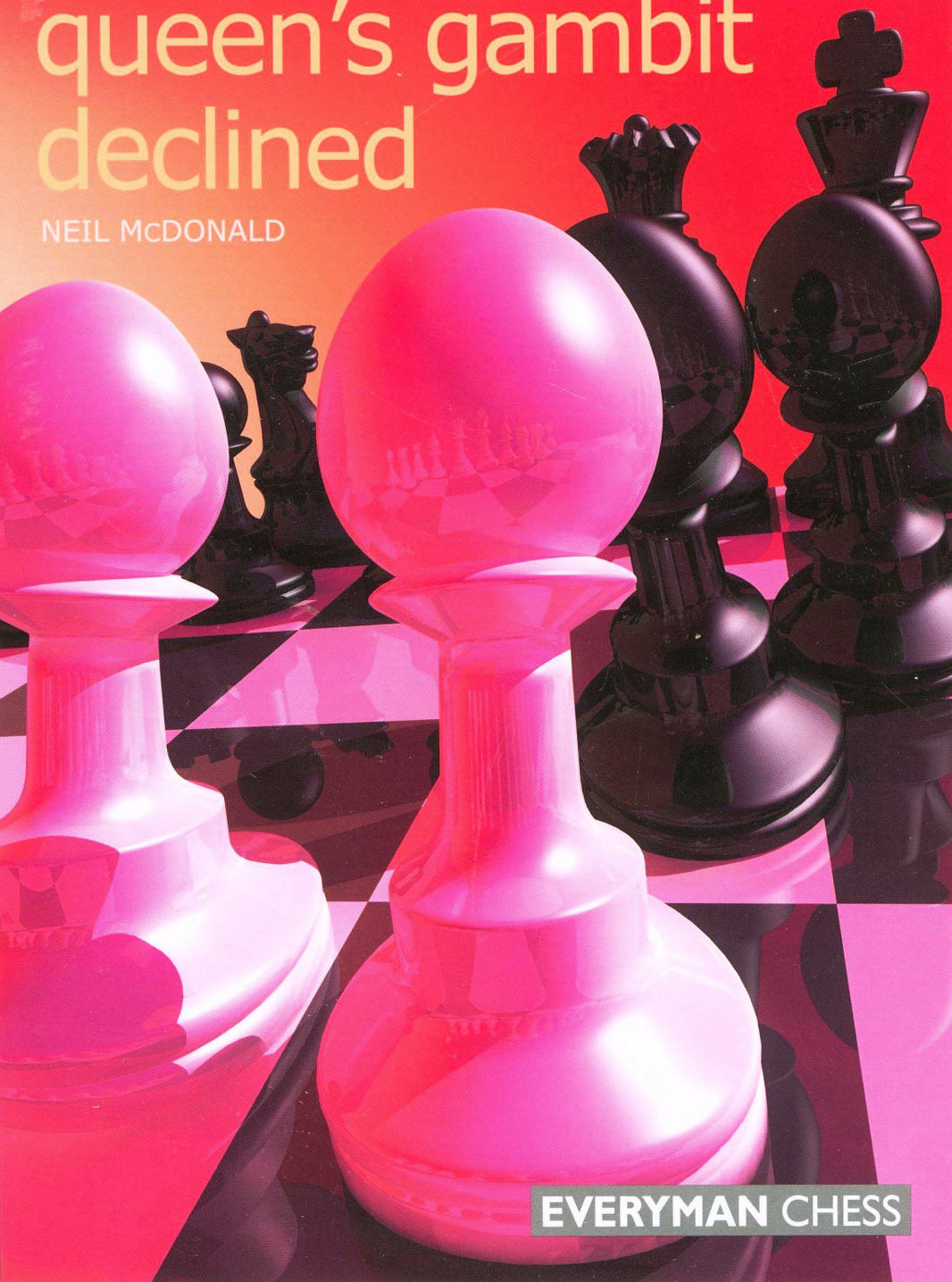


starting out: queen's gambit declined

NEIL McDONALD



EVERYMAN CHESS

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Introduction

The beautiful thing about playing the Queen's Gambit Declined as Black is that your opponent will have to play better than you if he wants to win. And if he plays badly, there is nothing stopping you from bagging the whole point.

But isn't that the case in any opening you might choose? Not necessarily. Let me relate an experience I have had far too often for my liking playing the King's Indian as Black. From the start, I cede space to my opponent in return for kingside attacking chances. Already this puts pressure on me to find the most accurate continuation, perhaps even a difficult combination or a deep sacrifice. And if I don't find the precise move or idea that is needed, I will end up in trouble. Therefore, my opponent doesn't necessarily have to play better than me to win the game: if I fail to show enough energy or invention, I could end up being crushed by fairly straightforward positional moves.

Now, there are many players – notable examples being Kasparov and Fischer – who have achieved fantastic success through counterattacking in the King's Indian. They have a great ability to calculate and find hidden resources, and are armed to the teeth with opening knowledge.

But what about newcomers to chess, or players with limited time to study, or those of us not blessed with a deep calculating apparatus?

If you come into that category, then why not play the Queen's Gambit? When you push 1...d5 you are saying to the opponent: I'm not giving you any space for free; it's going to be an equal fight, and if you want to try to win you are going to have to find a lot of creative moves!

A comparison with the King's Indian reveals another good feature of the Queen's Gambit: it is very tolerant of slight positional mistakes. In the King's Indian a small error can prove very costly for Black, as the emphasis is on counterattack. Whereas in the Queen's Gambit, if Black puts a bishop on a rather passive square,

or loosens his pawns more than strictly necessary, he can remedy his error with careful consolidating moves. There is no need to do or die.

It is this reputation for solidity and reliability that has attracted some of the most famous players in the history of chess to the Queen's Gambit Declined. Within these pages, you will find games by the likes of Capablanca, Alekhine, Botvinnik, Petrosian, Spassky, Fischer, Karpov, Kasparov and Kramnik. There are no games by the second World Champion, Emanuel Lasker, but as consolation we do have a chapter named in his honour; while the ghost of his great predecessor, Wilhelm Steinitz, the positional genius, pervades all the ideas in the book.

As the Queen's Gambit Declined is to a large extent 'theory proof', I have at times been able to mix modern theory with the games of the great masters. I hope you enjoy learning about this evergreen opening, and manage to pull off some wins in the style of a World Champion!

A note on content

Judging from other books I have consulted on the Queen's Gambit Declined, it is by no means easy to decide which lines should be included.

After some soul searching, I decided against giving any coverage of the Tarrasch or Semi-Tarrasch Defences (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5 and 3...Nf6 4 Nf3 c5).

If someone is indeed starting out with the Queen's Gambit Declined, they need a basic platform upon which to build up their knowledge and test ideas – and for this purpose I have selected the solid d5/e6 black pawn centre. It might be said that the gulf between the plans typical of this centre and the Tarrasch are as great as those between the Grünfeld and King's Indian.

I had less trouble deciding to omit the Ragozin and Vienna. I don't regard them as true Queen's Gambit variations. The typical way they start is 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 and here Black wants to answer 3 Nc3 with 3...Bb4, the Nimzo-Indian. After 3 Nf3, he is frustrated in his aim of pinning on c3 immediately, and so waits, continuing 3...d5 4 Nc3 Bb4 or 4...dxc4 5 e4 Bb4. Such play does not really fit in with the strategic aims of the Queen's Gambit Declined.

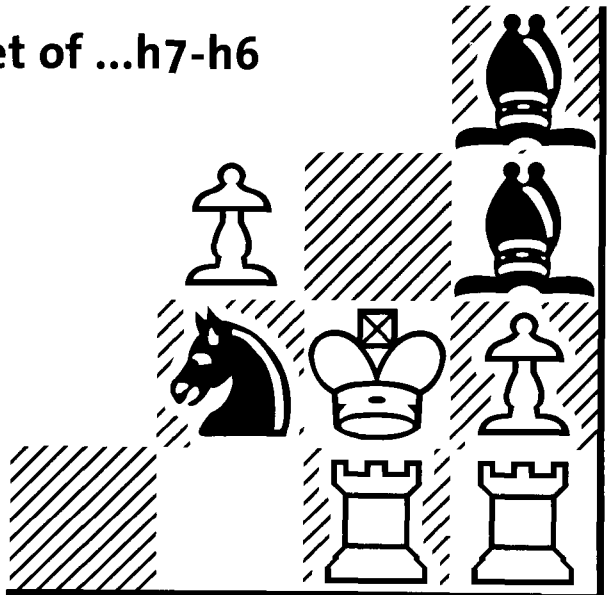
Finally there's the Semi-Slav, where Black plays both ...e6 and ...c6 early on. This vast subject is an opening in its own right and here I would guide readers to Glenn Flear's *Starting Out: Slav and Semi-Slav*.

Neil McDonald,
Kent,
September 2006

Chapter One

Starting Moves and Strategy

- ▨ The first five moves
- ▨ Pawn structures in the QGD
- ▨ An historical interlude
- ▨ Some typical disasters for Black
- ▨ The secret of ...h7-h6



The first five moves

In case you get bored and never get further than this chapter – a constant danger when reading a chess book – I've put all the essential stuff you need to know first.

1 d4 d5

A good start! Black seizes an equal share of the centre and exerts control over the c4- and e4-squares.

2 c4

White immediately attacks the d5-pawn in a bid to overthrow the black centre.

2...e6

So we support our pawn and at the same time open the diagonal for the king's bishop.

If you wanted to take the pawn on c4, I'm sorry, you picked up the wrong book – that would be the Queen's Gambit *Accepted*.

3 Nc3

White continues to develop and increases the pressure on d5.

3...Nf6

Now out comes the king's knight to its best square.

4 Bg5

A strong attacking move which keeps up the attempt to overthrow the d5-point. White pins the knight and threatens 5 Bxf6, when 5...Qxf6 loses a pawn to 6 cxd5, while 5...gxf6 6 cxd5 exd5 leaves Black with a wrecked kingside.

If instead 4 Nf3, you play 4...Be7 anyway, and after 5 Bg5 0-0.

If you want to look straightaway at White's alternative approach with 4 exd5, please refer to the section entitled 'Exchange Variation' below.

4...Be7

Black breaks the pin in an efficient manner by developing his bishop.

5 e3

Clearing the way for the king's bishop to enter the game. Is there a difference if White plays 5 Nf3 here? Nothing to concern us at the moment; you just castle.

5...0-0 (Diagram 1)

It has only taken five moves for Black to develop his kingside, castle his king into safety and establish his centre with a strong point on d5. Nothing has gone dreadfully wrong, and Black can look forward to his middlegame adventures with a clear conscience.

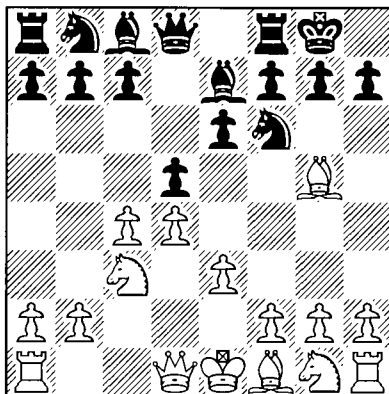


Diagram 1 (W)

The Queen's Gambit Declined

Some other move orders

Now let's think about move orders. After **1 d4 d5** White might play **2 Nf3**. This would mess Black up if he were planning something sophisticated like the Benko Gambit, but our Queen's Gambit scheme of ...d5/...e6/...Nf6/...Be7 is proof against anything. So we reply **2...Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 0-0** and we have our standard set-up again.

Actually there is nothing particularly wrong with 2...e6, but it lacks flexibility. By bringing out the knight first, Black keeps the option of replying to a non-Queen's Gambit move like 3 e3, the Colle System, with 3...Bf5 and only then 4...e6, when the light-squared bishop isn't shut in behind the e6-pawn.

Now imagine White plays **1 c4**. Then **1...e6** is the best way to go about our business. White can't stop us putting the pawn on d5: **2 Nc3 d5 3 d4 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7**.

We can also trace the same moves by Black in a sequence like **1 Nf3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 0-0**. Easy, isn't it?

It's not quite that simple for Black: the imprisoned bishop

Of course, there is always some sort of drawback to whatever system of defence Black chooses in the opening: there is no escaping the fact that White moves first, and, unless he suffers a mishap, this advantage is going to continue into the middlegame.

In an ideal world, Black would always get his bishop out with ...Bf5 or ...Bg4 be-

fore playing ...e7-e6. As we saw above, after 1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 e3 he would jump at the chance of 3...Bf5. However, when White plays 2 c4 or 3 c4, the positional threat to d5 can't be ignored; and the imprisonment of the bishop on c8 is the price Black is prepared to pay in the Queen's Gambit Declined for achieving an otherwise model development of his pieces.

Once he has secured a decent position from the opening, Black immediately begins to regret his crime against the bishop on c8. He will always be considering ways of releasing it. For example in Chapter Two we look at variations with ...b7-b6 and ...Bb7. It is no small matter to weaken the queenside pawns in this fashion, but the bishop needs a means of escape.



NOTE: As the activation of his queen's bishop is so vital to Black, at the start of each subsequent chapter I have assessed how 'queen's bishop friendly' is the variation under discussion.

Pawn structures in the QGD

Another important aim for Black is to negate White's space advantage. As 2 c4 was such a wonderful move for White, it's no surprise that the mirror move ...c7-c5 should be ideal for Black.

Alas, whereas White can play 2 c4 without the slightest misgivings, the counter move ...c7-c5 requires careful judgement and induces a lot of anxiety in Black.

It all comes down to the injustice of Black having to move second in the opening. Taking the position after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3, if I were given four free moves for Black, then 6...b6, 7...Bb7, 8...Nbd7 and 9...c5 would demonstrate his correct strategy. (Actually, given four free moves I would prefer a kingside strategy with 6...Ne4, 7...Qd6, 8...Qg3 and 9...Qxf2, but you see what I mean.)

Assuming White and Black have both played fairly correctly, in many cases Black will achieve the ...c7-c5 advance, but in return he will have to take charge of an isolated queen's pawn (IQP) or *hanging pawns*.

Diagram 2 shows an example from Chapter Two, taken from the game Petrosian-Spassky.

The black pawns are said to be 'hanging' because they are centre pawns that are vulnerable to attack, but cannot be supported by pawns on either side of them; no ...b7-b6 or ...e7-e6 moves are possible. They are therefore 'hanging in the air' so to speak and have to be defended by pieces.

Nevertheless, any pawn that defends a centre square is performing a useful strategic function, no matter how weak it may be. Here the hanging pawns occupy the c5- and d5-squares, and guard the squares b4, c4, d4, and e4 – that's an awful lot of territory!

As will be seen in the discussion of hanging pawns in Chapter Two, they have pros and cons. Thus, in the example mentioned above, Petrosian, who is deservedly remembered as one of the most brilliant strategists ever, is soon trying to force a draw with the white pieces – so much for the weakness of the hanging pawns!

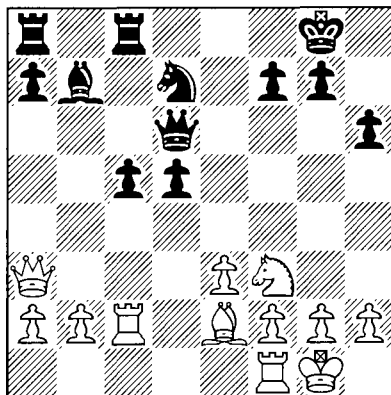


Diagram 2 (W)

Black has hanging pawns

You can see another example of hanging pawns in the historical section below.

The same kind of structural drawback is apparent when Black has an IQP. Here again, however, we should remember that the pawn on d5, although adrift from its fellows, is occupying one centre square and controlling two others. Assuming Black has put his pieces on decent squares, and there is no other weakness in his camp, an IQP will hardly cause Black much trouble. In fact it might well benefit his pieces, for example by giving the knights supported posts on c4 and e4. In Chapter Seven, which focuses on 5 Bf4, one of White's main ideas is to inflict an IQP, but it doesn't achieve much against reasonably accurate play.

Scare stories about Black's pawn structure

If, like me, you are a fan of chess history, you might well have come across the following game.

Game 1

□ **A.Rubinstein** ■ **G.Salwe**

Lodz (match) 1908

For the record, the opening moves were 1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 c5 3 c4 e6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Nc3

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

Nf6 6 g3 Nc6 7 Bg2 cxd4 8 Nxd4 Qb6 9 Nxc6 bxc6 10 0-0 Be7 11 Na4 Qb5 12 Be3 0-0 13 Rc1 Bg4 14 f3 Be6 15 Bc5 Rfe8 16 Rf2 Nd7 17 Bxe7 Rxe7 18 Qd4 Ree8 19 Bf1 Rec8 20 e3 Qb7 21 Nc5 Nxc5 22 Rxc5 Rc7 23 Rfc2 Qb6 (**Diagram 3**)

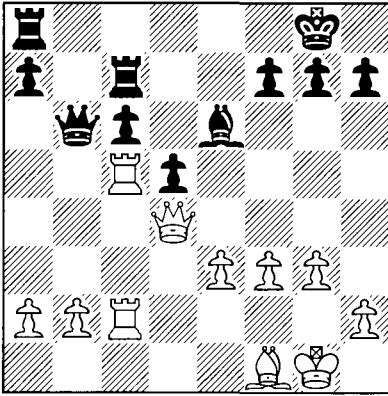


Diagram 3 (W)

A terrible bind

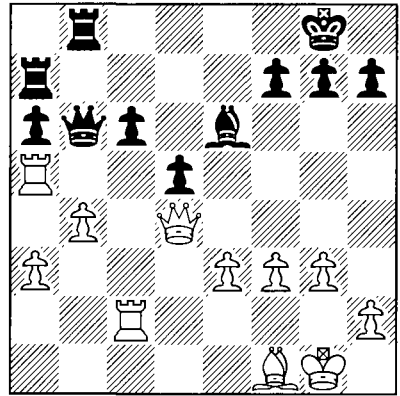


Diagram 4 (W)

White wins a pawn

24 b4!

Black is in a terrible bind on the queenside. An attempt to break free with 24...a5, the only glimmer of hope, is answered by 25 Rxa5 when 24...Qxd4 25 Rxa8+ is a deadly zwischenzug.

24...a6??

It was probably too late for Black to save his game, but putting the pawn on a square where it is attacked by the white bishop amounts to a death wish. With good reason Black is afraid of an eventual b4-b5, but a tougher defence was possible with, say, 24...Rb7 25 a3 Bd7. In fact, anything, anything at all apart from the game move!

25 Ra5!

Blocking out any possibility of ...a6-a5 forever and targeting the second pawn on a6.



NOTE: You will often hear of the principle of two weaknesses in an endgame. If there is just one weak pawn, the defender can normally survive; but two weaknesses are usually fatal, because the defensive power of his pieces is overstretched.

25...Rb8 26 a3 Ra7 (Diagram 4)

There was nothing to be done. Either a6 or c6 was going to drop: 26...Qxd4 27

exd4 made no difference; or if 26...Bc8 27 Qxb6 Rxb6 28 Rxd5 cxd5 29 Rxc7.

27 Rxc6! Qxc6 28 Qxa7 Ra8 29 Qc5 Qb7 30 Kf2 h5 31 Be2 g6 32 Qd6 Qc8 33 Rc5 Qb7 34 h4 a5 35 Rc7 Qb8 36 b5 a4 37 b6 Ra5 38 b7 1-0

This game has justly been cited as being typical of Rubinstein's excellent positional style. As Réti has remarked '[Rubinstein's] games create the impression of a great structure from which not one stone dare be shifted.'

Little boys who play the Queen's Gambit as Black have nightmares about something similar happening to them. I should know, as I first saw the Rubinstein game when I was about 12 years old in Chernev's book *The Golden Dozen*. Then to really rub in the message, Chernev gave the game again in his *Logical Chess*.

In fact, games in which everything goes to plan for White, and he wins in effortless style, often appear in books. Whereas games in which Black happens to fall into a bind but then defends resolutely and escapes with a draw, are ignored. No one wants to play through a long, dour struggle that ends in a draw.

I guess that is only to be expected, but it creates the impression that some perfectly defensible positions are in fact winning for the attacker. This can frighten off players from venturing the Queen's Gambit with Black, or, if they end up in a bind, they might lose heart and throw up their hands in despair, crying: 'I've seen this type of position before in books! I'm doomed!'

As some sort of redress, here is an example of a successful defence by Black in a World Championship match.

Game 2

□ **A.Alekhine** ■ **J.Capablanca**

World Championship (8th matchgame), Buenos Aires 1927

The opening moves were 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 e3 Be7 6 Nc3 0-0 7 Qc2 c5 8 cxd5 cxd4 9 Nxd4 Nxd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Nxd5 exd5 12 Bd3 Qb4+ 13 Qd2 Ne5 14 Be2 Qxd2+ 15 Kxd2 Bd7 16 Rac1 Rfc8 17 b3 Kf8 18 f4 Nc6 19 Bb5 Ke7 20 Bxc6 bxc6 (**Diagram 5**)

Here Alekhine played:

21 Rc5

We have another example of a queenside bind. With split pawns and a 'bad' bishop, you might think that Black is close to defeat. Certainly the white rook and knight are putting pressure on c6. If Black just 'passes' the way Salwe did, then White will gain a stranglehold on the queenside with 22 b4! followed by Rhc1, Ra5 and Ra6, when c6 will be attacked three times. If Black prevents Ra6 with ...a7-a6, then the pawn is in range of Nb3 and Nc5.

But Capablanca, the genius who lost fewer games than any other player of world

class, is not about to lay down and die. He confounded White's plan with...

21...a5!!

Incidentally, this would also have been the reply to 21 b4.

22 Rhc1 Kd6!

In comparison with the Rubinstein game, it must be mentioned that the queens having been exchanged greatly helps Black. In effect Capablanca has an extra piece to defend his centre pawns, as he doesn't need to fear a mating attack.

23 R1c3 Ra6 24 Nb5+ Ke7 25 Nd4 Kd6 26 e4

The last winning attempt.

26...dxe4 27 Ke3 Rb8! (Diagram 6)

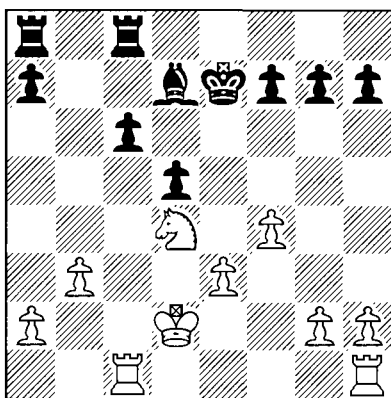


Diagram 5 (W)

Another queenside bind

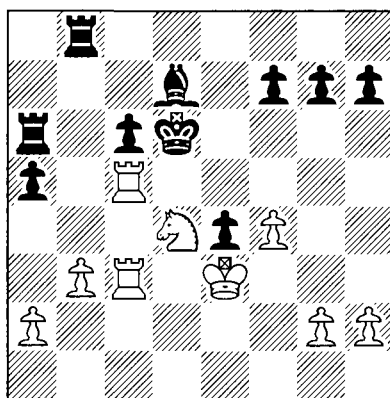


Diagram 6 (W)

Black activates the rook

Black seizes the chance to activate his rook along the semi-open b-file. Alekhine decides to exchange off minor pieces, as after 28 Kxe4 a4, followed by 29...axb3, White will have a pawn on b3 just as weak as c6 – weaker, in fact, as it doesn't have the king to guard it.

28 Nf5+ Bxf5 29 Rxf5 f6 30 Rc4 Rb5!

After this final precise move the game burns out into a draw.

31 Rd4+ Ke6 32 Rxb5 cxb5 33 Rxe4+ Kf7 34 Rd4 Rc6 35 Rd7+ Kg6 36 Kd2 Rc5 37 Ra7 b4 38 g4 h5 39 h3 h4 40 f5+ Kh6 41 Ra8 Kh7 42 Ke3 Rc3+ 1/2-1/2



TIP: If you fall into a passive position with the Queen's Gambit, remember Capablanca's defence above. There is always a good chance of saving the game if you play with patience, but are ready to counterattack at the right moment.

You may not win every game you play with the Queen's Gambit, but you will avoid some bitter defeats, and a crisp defence can be as rewarding as a fine attack. I can't resist showing you the finish to one Kasparov-Karpov game from their very first match way back in 1984, even though it wasn't a Queen's Gambit.

□ G.Kasparov ■ A.Karpov

World Championship (18th matchgame), Moscow 1984

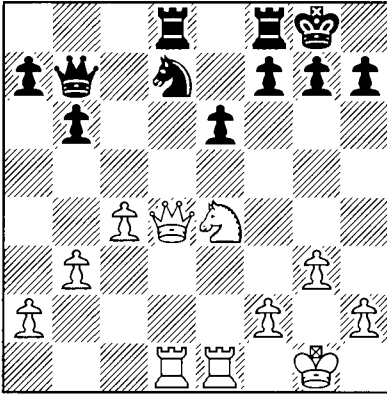


Diagram 7 (B)

Solve the d-file problems

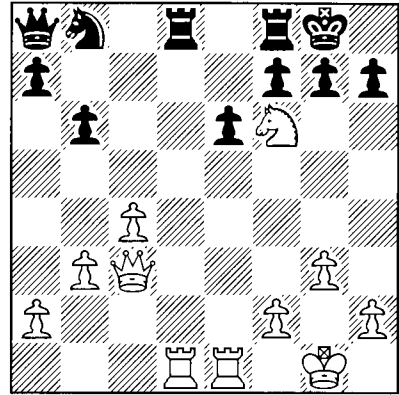


Diagram 8 (B)

A drawing combination

(Diagram 7) It looks as though Black is in trouble due to the pin on the d-file, but Karpov solved his problems in just two moves:

20...Qa8!

The best square, as it keeps an eye on the long light-square diagonal.

21 Qc3

The white queen also has to retire, as with d8 defended a second time, the freeing move 21...Nc5 was on the cards, when White would have had to play the awkward 22 Nd6 just to avoid losing a piece.

21...Nb8!

The knight joins the queen in the corner. The threat is 22...Rxd1 23 Rxd1 Qxe4 winning the knight, and if 22 Qe3 Nc6 23 Nd6?! Black can choose between 23...Rd7, which is quite good enough, or 23...e5 planning 24...Nd4 and hopefully a big check on f3.

22 Nf6+ (Diagram 8) ½-½

Sensibly deciding not to push his luck, Kasparov offered a draw after making this

sham sacrifice. A possible finish is 22...gxf6 23 Qxf6 Nd7 24 Rxd7 Rxd7 25 Qg5+ Kh8 26 Qf6+ Kg8 etc. with perpetual check.

Only a 'boring' draw in 22 moves, you might think, but there is something beautiful about the way Karpov curled his pieces up in the corner, readying them to spring forwards if provoked by some impetuous play from his opponent.

The Exchange Variation

So far we have based our comments on the position after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0. A radically different approach for White is also possible. After any point from move three onwards, White could exchange on d5: for example

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 (Diagram 9)

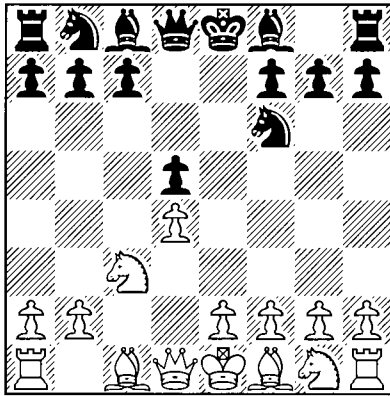


Diagram 9 (W)

The Exchange Variation

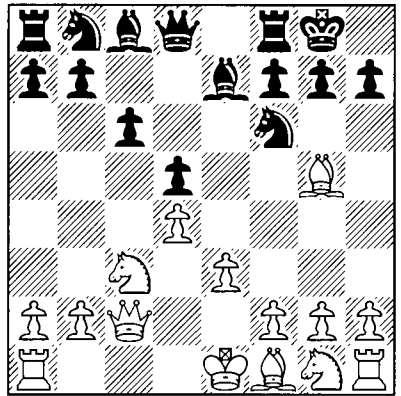


Diagram 10 (W)

Black completes kingside deployment

Of course Black maintains a pawn on d5. Now you might think that all is delightful for Black as a diagonal has been opened for his bishop on c8 – no need to play ...b7-b6 and ...Bb7 when f5 is available!

However, things are by no means that simple and this line of play is very popular with White. You will find a long and detailed discussion of the strategy in Chapter Six. For now let's just look at the next three moves:

5 Bg5

As always this is the most annoying move. Black has to deal with the threat of 6 Bxf6, when either he loses the d5-pawn or submits to a horrible pawn structure with 6...gxf6.

5...c6

A useful, if not entirely forced move that cements Black's hold on d5. If you prefer 5...Be7 I won't stop you. Only make sure to play ...c7-c6 before you ever dream of ...Bf5 or else you might be hit by Qb3.

6 Qc2

Unlucky; the white queen stops you activating the bishop with ...Bf5.

6...Be7

Once again the bishop blocks the pin on the black knight.

7 e3 0-0 (Diagram 10)

It's taken slightly longer than usual, but Black completes his kingside deployment in only seven moves. Now at least nothing horrible can happen to the black king in the centre, and you can keep on developing with ...Nbd7 and ...Re8.

An historical interlude

I've always been puzzled by the lack of popularity of 1 d4 for most of the 19th century. I still find it astonishing that the great Paul Morphy played against 1 d4 a mere eight times! I knew the standard explanation: it was a romantic age and everyone liked to attack, so they preferred the King's Gambit.

Nevertheless, I wasn't convinced. After all, Paul Morphy tended to play 2 Nf3 rather than the King's Gambit in serious games; and, besides, I suspect quite a few players would have loved to have had the means to escape from the labyrinthine variations of the King's Gambit and make their romantic attacks in less explored middlegames. So why didn't these players investigate 1 d4 in any depth?

Were players really so bigoted and narrow-minded that no one could see further than pushing the king's pawn two squares? Then I took a look at early 1 d4 games and the reason why no one was keen on it became obvious. In fact, I even started to hate 1 d4 myself!

The early 1 d4 games all began 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 e3 (**Diagram 11**) or 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3.

Yes, White is shutting in his queen's bishop, which destroys any chance he has of taking the initiative in the opening. This was how Saint Amant played against Staunton seven times in their 1843 match, which was effectively a World Championship match. Staunton and others players who knew their stuff would reply 3...c5! when White has no advantage to speak of, because of the lame bishop on c1.

Even the great Adolf Anderssen, of Immortal and Evergreen Game fame, played the miserable move 3 e3. It is no wonder, then, that when he wanted to escape from Morphy's 1 e4 e5 theory in their match, he had no stomach for 1 d4; instead he chose 1 a3!

Other strong players over the next thirty years (such as Falkbeer, Elijah Williams, Owen, and Löwenthal) all succumbed to the e2-e3 'disease'. What poor fare for

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

White, when he could play 1 e4, and, if not the King's Gambit, then at least keep the advantage with 2 Nf3.

So why would everyone play the flaccid 3 e3 or 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3? Obviously it defends the c4-pawn; but that isn't the whole reason. *No one had realized at the time that the development of the queen's bishop to g5 would give White a positional advantage.*

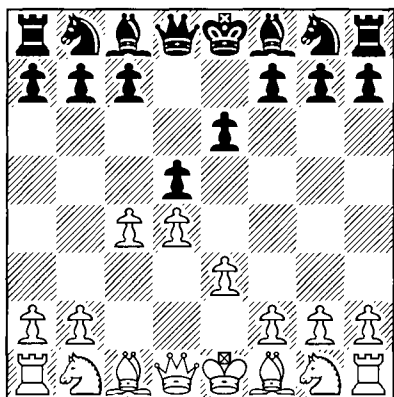


Diagram 11 (B)

White's set-up is passive

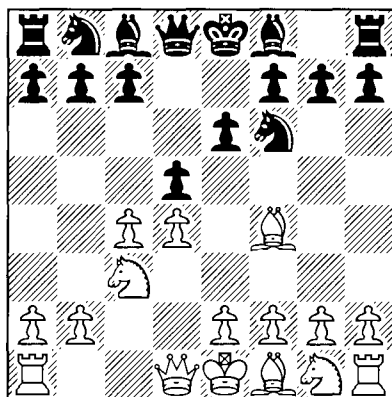


Diagram 12 (B)

A more active deployment

A contemporary of Morphy, Daniel Harrwitz, almost got there: He played 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bf4 (**Diagram 12**), which is certainly more enterprising than 4 e3. He even used his opening to beat Morphy himself. However, it didn't receive much attention as Black has good replies in 4...c5 or 4...Bb4. (Note that the 'modern' method 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 has much more value for White, as 5...Bb4 now loses a move; so does 5...c5 6 dxc5 Bxc5, as the black bishop moves twice.)

If you think about it, it is by no means obvious why the Bg5 move should cause Black any trouble. For example, compare it to the Ruy Lopez where 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 carries a definite, if not immediate threat to the e5-pawn after Bxc6. What, in comparison, does Bg5 do, when the d5-pawn is soundly defended by both the queen and pawn on e6?

Things started to look up in the 1870s, or more specifically a tournament at Vienna in 1873, when the world discovered Bg5! A player (who I had never heard of) called Josef Heral used 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 five times, scoring three wins and two losses – he beat the famous Louis Paulsen and the master Flessig. Steinitz also won a notable game against Anderssen that is given in Chapter Two. The Bg5 ball was clearly rolling, and the games quickly got a 'modern feel' to them.

Carelessness on the c-file; or how to lose a World Championship in one move

Here is game 22 of a World Championship match held in 1892. The score is 8-8 in wins with six draws. (Oh, those great days when the draw wasn't always the victor in matches!) The first player to win ten games will be the Champion. So, obviously, now is not the time to go blundering a pawn in the opening.

Game 3

□ **W.Steinitz** ■ **M.Chigorin**

World Championship (22nd matchgame), Havana 1892

1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 e6 3 c4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 b6

The players blithely go about their business, playing an opening variation that was to be 'invented' many years later by Saviely Tartakower, who was only five years old at the time. Incidentally, on the subject of baby chess players, this game was played in Havana, the home town of Capablanca, who would have been four years old. I wonder if he got to see any of the games?

7 Rc1 Bb7 8 Be2 Nbd7 9 cxd5 Nxd5?? (Diagram 13)

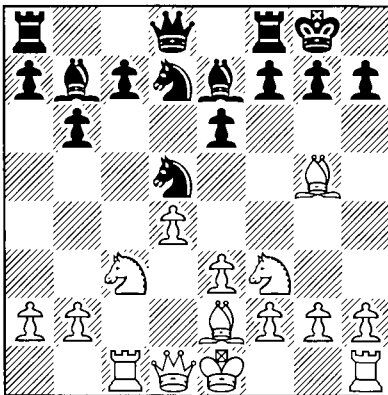


Diagram 13 (W)

Black blunders a pawn

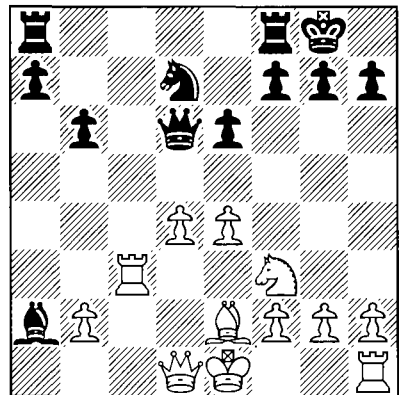


Diagram 14 (B)

The a2-bishop has no retreat

If you want to play the Queen's Gambit successfully, you must always be on the look out for potential disaster on the c-file. If there is an exchanging sequence involving the ...Nd5 or ...Ne4 move, make sure that you try out the moves in every possible order, and that none of them leave you a pawn down.

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

Of course Chigorin wants an open diagonal for his bishop on b7, but 9...exd5 was imperative.

10 Nxd5!

Instead 10 Bxe7 gives Black the chance to correct himself with 10...Nxe7.

10...Bxd5 11 Bxe7 Qxe7 12 Rxc7

And there goes the pawn.

12...Qd6 13 Rc3

Embarrassed at his mistake, Chigorin loses his head and grabs back a pawn.

13...Bxa2?

Evidence that Bobby Fischer wasn't the first challenger to lose a bishop after grabbing a hot rook's pawn.

14 e4! (Diagram 14)

Now there is no way back to d5 for the bishop.

14...Qb4 15 Qa1 Bb3 16 Nd2 Bc2 17 Rc4 Qd6 18 Rxc2 Qxd4 19 0-0

And no doubt furious with himself, Black battled on uselessly until move 49 before resigning. The match only lasted one more game: Chigorin blundered into a mate in two a piece up!

Such games represent an incredible progress for White on the turgid 3 e3 approach to the Queen's Gambit.

Once the value of 4 Bg5 had been discovered, and proven in practice by Steinitz, it became the mainstay for White in the Queen's Gambit. Thereafter 1 d4 began to appear more and more often in tournaments.

Wilhelm Steinitz has been described as the father of modern chess. He believed that rather than looking for combinations or opportunistic attacks on the opponent's king, a player should build up his game in careful style and try to accumulate small advantages. Only when a large positional superiority has been established should a player embark on an all out attack.

The improvement in chess technique – the tools that Steinitz had handed other masters – suited the Queen's Gambit. Players learnt how to nurture small advantages. By the 1920s, twenty years after Steinitz's death, you couldn't move at an international tournament without treading on a Queen's Gambit.

Some typical disasters for Black

A badly judged ...Ne4

Often Black tries to free his game with the move ...Ne4. He has to make sure that

not only is the knight adequately protected, but also that the supporting pillar on d5 isn't going to collapse.

□ J.Federau ■ W.Schueler

Berlin 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 c6 6 e3 Be7 7 Qc2

A crafty move order that fools his opponent. It seems ludicrous to imagine that there might be a combination against d5, but look what happens in two moves time:

7...Ne4?? (Diagram 15)

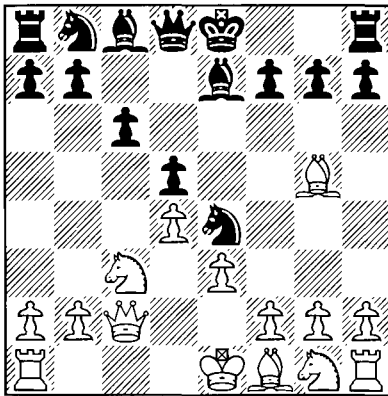


Diagram 15 (W)

A badly judged ...Ne4

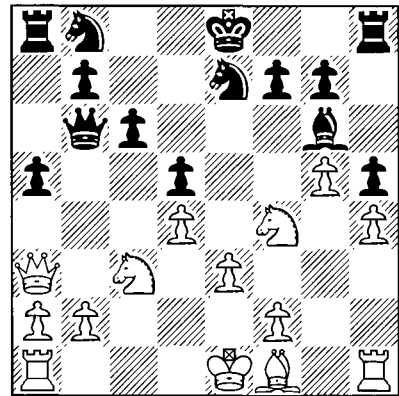


Diagram 16 (W)

Another disaster on d5

The standard freeing idea, but it should have waited.

8 Bxe7 Qxe7? 9 Nxd5! 1-0

After 9...cxd5 10 Qxc8+ it's bedlam.

Here is another disaster on d5:

□ R.Meessen ■ M.Vandersmissen

Belgian League 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bf4 c6 6 e3 Bf5 7 g4 Bg6 8 h4 h5 9 g5 Bd6 10 Nge2 Ne7 11 Qb3 Bxf4 12 Nxf4 Qb6 13 Qa3 a5?? (Diagram 16)

The idea is to curb the white queen after 14...Qb4! (a common enough strategic idea), but Black has missed a big tactic:

14 Qxe7+! 1-0

After 14...Kxe7 15 Nfxd5+ cxd5 16 Nxd5+ Kd8 17 Nxb6 Black is two pawns down.

Allowing the opening of the c-file

Game 4

□ J.Capablanca ■ M.Vidmar

London 1922

1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 e3 0-0 7 Rc1 c6 8 Qc2 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 b6? (Diagram 17)

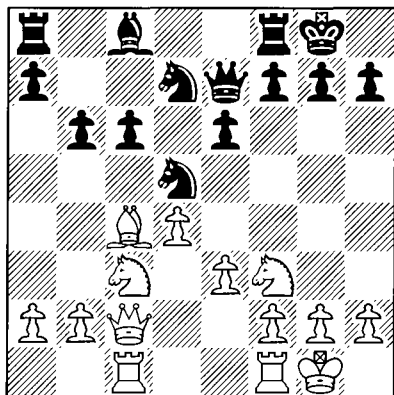


Diagram 17 (W)

Watch out for the c-file

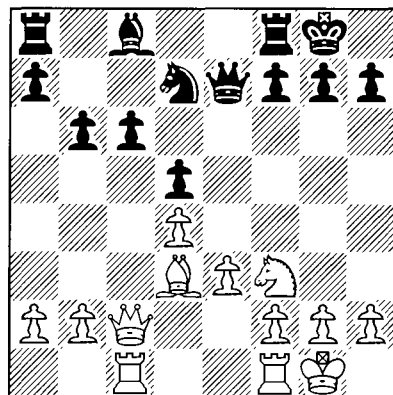


Diagram 18 (B)

White attacks c6 and h7

An inaccuracy that is enough to lose the game between good players. Black might have played 11...Nxc3 12 Qxc3 b6 intending ...Bb7, which is the way Capablanca himself handled the position as Black.

12 Nxd5!

A timely exchange. If now 12...exd5 (the strategically vital move that keeps the c-file blocked) 13 Bd3 (**Diagram 18**) wins a pawn. Black can't deal with the double threat of 14 Qxc6 and 14 Bxh7+.

Take a long hard look at the diagram position. This is the number one way you are likely to screw up in the Queen's Gambit. After all, Vidmar was one of the best

Grandmasters of his day and he fell for it!

It is easy to forget about the h7-pawn when all your thoughts are on the queenside, which is why the trap of a simultaneous attack against the black c-pawn – whether it is on c7, c6 or c5 – and the h7-pawn occurs so frequently.

It is also why Black throws in the ...h7-h6 move, attacking the white bishop on g5, before embarking on other operations in systems like the Lasker or Tartakower. He doesn't want to find himself distracted by his h7-pawn hanging to a Bd3 and Qc2 battery when he wants to be concentrating on other matters! Note, however, that Black only plays ...h7-h6 when he gets to do it 'for free' by attacking the bishop on g5. Otherwise ...h7-h6 is to be condemned as a waste of time or even a gratuitous weakening of the black kingside.

In the game, rather than play 12...exd5, Vidmar chose the lesser evil:

12...cxd5 13 Bd3!

Here also White profits by gaining time at the expense of the h7-pawn.

13...h6 14 Qc7! (Diagram 19)

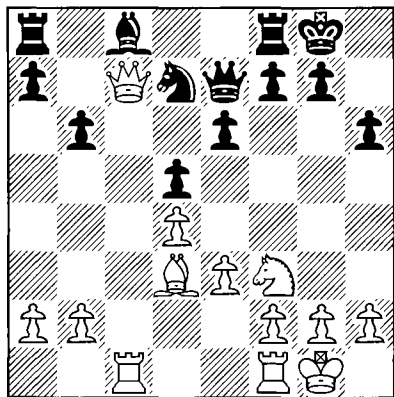


Diagram 19 (B)

Black is paralysed

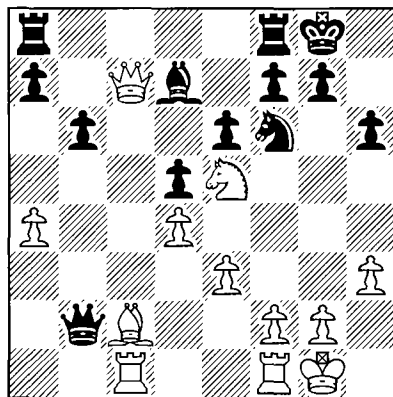


Diagram 20 (W)

White wins a piece (or not)

The queen rams herself right into the guts of the black position, causing fatal paralysis.

14...Qb4 15 a3!

Nicely calculated. If now 15...Qxb2 16 Rb1 Qxa3 17 Bb5! and Black either walks into a piece winning pin after 17...Qe7 18 Ne5 or loses his queen after 17...Nf6 18 Ra1 Qb4 19 Rfb1.

15...Qa4 16 h3 Nf6 17 Ne5 Bd7

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

A bid to escape the pressure that should lose a piece. Also insufficient is 17...Ba6 18 b3! Qa5 19 Nc6 Qxa3 20 Ra1 and the bishop will drop. Of course Black has other moves that hang on, but he was in any case slowly being suffocated.

18 Bc2 Qb5 19 a4 Qxb2 (Diagram 20)

Here simply 20 Rb1 Qa2 21 Bb3 Qa3 22 Nxd7 wins a piece. Capablanca played the careless...

20 Nxd7?!

...and had to work harder for the win, though it wasn't too difficult:

20...Rac8 21 Qb7 Nxd7 22 Bh7+ Kxh7 23 Rxc8 Rxc8 24 Qxc8 Nf6 25 Rc1 Qb4 26 Qc2+ Kg8 27 Qc6 Qa3 28 Qa8+ Kh7 29 Rc7 Qxa4 30 Rxf7 Qd1+ 31 Kh2 Qh5 32 Qxa7 Qg6 33 Rf8 Qf5 34 Rf7 Qg6 35 Rb7 Ne4 36 Qa2 e5 37 Qxd5 exd4 38 Rb8 Nf6 39 Qxd4 Qf5 40 Rxb6 Qxf2 41 Qd3+ Kg8 42 Rb8+ 1-0



TIP: Avoid disaster along the c-file and you will never lose as Black in the Queen's Gambit!

The secret of ...h7-h6

Finally, I want to think about the little move ...h7-h6 in the opening. Why does Black jump at the chance to play 6...h6 in the Tartakower and Lasker Defences, but avoid it like the plague in the Classical and Exchange Variations?

I've read some vague explanations about long-term plans in other books, such as how you won't be mated on move 112 by a rook because you were a clever little bunny and dug an escape tunnel for your king with 6...h6.

But I finally realized it's all rather simple: if you have two knights willing to guard h7, you don't go ...h7-h6.

In the Classical, Black quickly plays ...Nbd7, which means that he has a second knight ready to take up guard duty on f6 if White ever plays Bxf6. So Black hardly ever has to be afraid of tricks like Bd3 and Qc2 ganging up on c7 and h7 in the Orthodox. I say 'hardly ever' because Vidmar of course fell for that trap in the Orthodox in the example above!

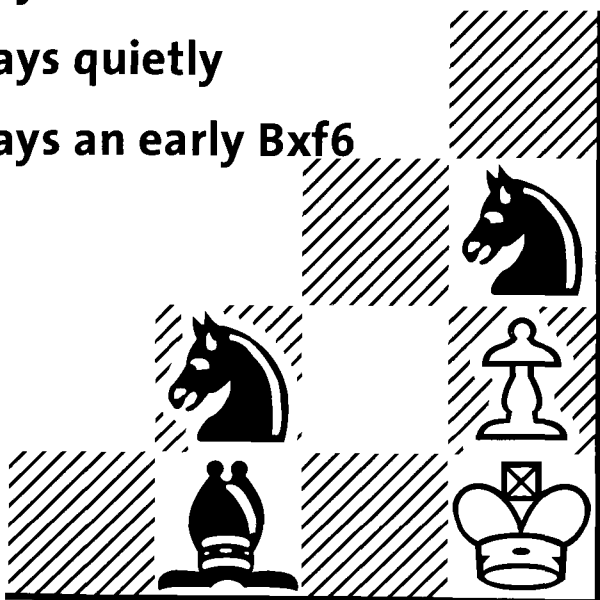
The same goes for the Exchange Variation: a second knight quickly arrives on d7 to back up the one on f6. And if the knight ever moves from d7, more often than not it is to f8, where it defends h7 directly.

In contrast, in the Tartakower Black doesn't play ...Nbd7, so he is in more danger of a blow against h7; if White ever plays Bxf6, Black recaptures ...Bxf6, and h7 is undefended by a knight. Thus Black throws in ...h7-h6 at the first opportunity. Likewise in the Lasker: the black knight leaves f6 for e4, and it will be a long time, if ever, before the h7-pawn is guarded by another knight. Hence, ...h7-h6 is played.

Chapter Two

Tartakower's Defence

- Introduction
- An historical interlude
- Hanging pawns
- White plays 9 Bxf6
- White plays quietly
- White plays an early Bxf6



Introduction

The modern starting position of the Tartakower Defence is reached after the moves **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bh4 b6 (Diagram 1)**

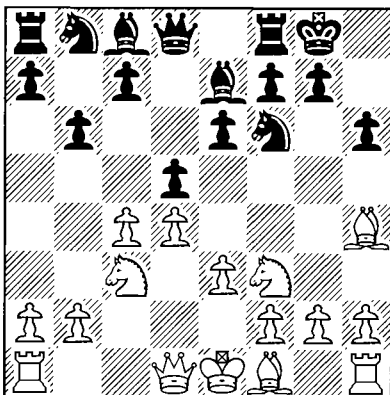


Diagram 1 (W)

Tartakower's Defence

The first five moves were discussed in Chapter One. Thereafter, in response to the standard developing move 6 Nf3 – the move order 5 Nf3 and 6 e3 is virtually interchangeable – Black takes time out to kick the bishop back with 6...h6.

Having developed his kingside to his satisfaction, Black intends to do the same on the queenside with ...Bb7, ...Nbd7 and ...c7-c5. Then the white centre will be dismantled with ...c5xd4 and ...d5xc4, the latter move also opening up a fine diagonal for the bishop on b7.

Ah, chess is so easy when you don't have an opponent! In the real world, a skilful White player will meet Black halfway: he will let his opponent advance ...c7-c5 (in truth he can't really stop it), but then, rather than allow all the centre pawns to vanish, he will try to leave his opponent with one, or possibly two, pawns that are vulnerable to attack.

Queen's Bishop friendly?

Extremely so. At the cost of loosening his queenside pawns, Black immediately clears the b7-square for the lucky bishop. Thereafter in some lines it may be freed in explosive style by the advance of the black centre with ...d5-d4; or it may sit quietly behind the pawns, but still be a valued guardian of the light squares – so

much so that White could well try to exchange it off with a manoeuvre like Qe2 and Ba6. Alternatively, ...b7-b6 may turn out to be a feint, as the bishop might come out via e6 if White plays a quick c4xd5, compelling Black to recapture ...e6xd5.

The name of the opening

Saviely Tartakower, a strong and inventive Austro-Polish Grandmaster who peaked in the late 1920s, is best known these days for two things. The first is the subject of this chapter, which he played against Capablanca in London 1922; the second is his witticisms such as 'a sacrifice only proves someone has blundered', 'the mistakes are all there waiting to be made', and 'an isolated pawn spreads gloom all over the chess board'. There is also something paradoxical about his defence. We might add: 'in the Tartakower Black plays 7...b6 in order to develop the bishop on e6'.

An historical interlude

A journey from early experiments to modern GM play

Before we look at recent top notch games, where the players on the whole handle the openings with a great deal of precision, I want to step back in time and examine some of the Tartakower prototypes. This will help us to understand how the handling of the Defence has gradually been perfected – and also reveal the sort of mistakes and opportunities that might arise in games between less experienced players. Why, for example, should Black play ...b7-b6 and ...Bb7 before ...Nbd7; which way should he recapture after c4xd5; and why exactly does he need to get the h7-pawn out of the way of a future Qc2? All these questions and more will be answered in what follows.

An accelerated fianchetto punished

Game 5

□ H.Pillsbury ■ R.Swidorski

Hanover 1902

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 b6?!

The Tartakower in its crudest form. Having just shut the bishop in with 2...e6, Black immediately opens an escape route for it. Develop knights before bishops, say the opening primers, and for once they are right! You can't go wrong with

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

3...Nf6 – the knight is bound to be on its best square, no matter what plan of attack White chooses. But so early on in the game, how can Black possibly know whether the queen's bishop belongs on b7 or some other square?



TIP: Play the moves that you know are good rather than the moves that might turn out well.

4 Nf3 Bb7?

Black should at least develop with 4...Nf6. Then if necessary he could always change his mind about putting the bishop on b7, say after 5 exd5 exd5, when ...Bg4 or ...Be6 might be the better option. In any case, Black should be rushing to complete his kingside development with ...Be7 and ...0-0 before the storm breaks in the centre.

5 cxd5 exd5 6 e4! (Diagram 2)

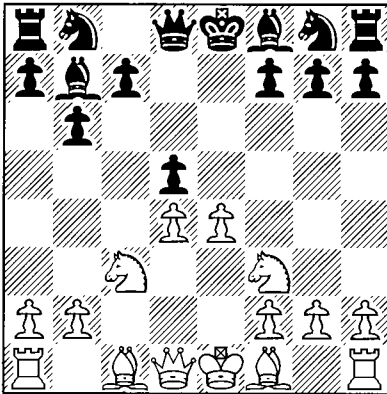


Diagram 2 (B)

It's already gone wrong for Black

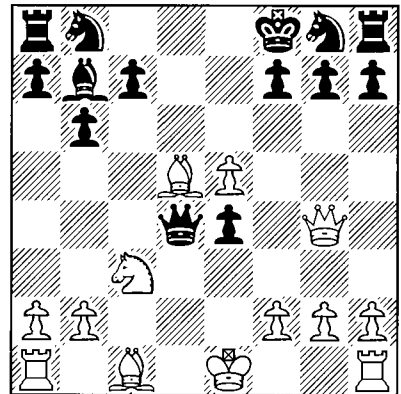


Diagram 3 (B)

Shutting down the long diagonal

An excellent move. With the black bishop on b7 shut out from defending the light-square diagonal a2-g8, White moves immediately to open up an attack on the f7-square.

6...dxe4 7 Ne5 Bd6 8 Qg4

There really should have been a bishop on c8 or a knight on f6 to stop this move.

8...Kf8 9 Bc4 Bxe5

After 9...Nf6 10 Nxf7 Nxf7 11 Nxd8 is crushing.

10 dxe5 Qd4! 11 Bd5! (Diagram 3)

Reducing Black's opening strategy to absurdity, as it turns out the black bishop

doesn't even control the a8-h1 diagonal.

11...c6

Black is annihilated after 11...Bxd5 12 Qc8+ Ke7 13 Qxc7+ Ke8 14 Qc8+ Ke7 15 Bg5+ f6 16 Rd1 when the black queen dare not move because of 17 Nxd5+.

12 Bxe4 Qxe5 13 Bf4 Nf6 14 Qh4 Qe7 15 0-0

Back at the turn of the 20th century, it was hard to escape the 'rule' that said you had to castle kingside. More vigorous was 15 0-0-0 (**Diagram 4**) when if 15...Nxe4 16 Rd8+ wins at once. After the game move, Black can grovel on with 15...Nxe4 16 Qxe7+ Kxe7 17 Nxe4 c5!.

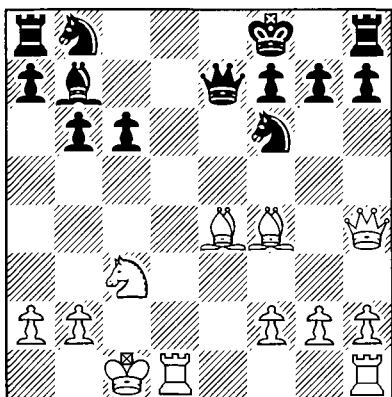


Diagram 4 (B)

Position after 15 0-0-0

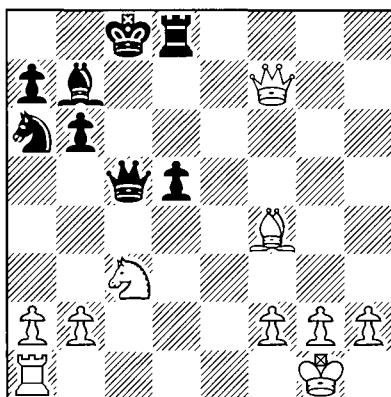


Diagram 5 (B)

White is winning

15...Ne8? 16 Qg3!

Naturally, with a big lead in development and the black rook permanently shut out of the game on h8, White is keen to avoid the exchange of queens.

16...Na6 17 Rfe1 Rd8 18 Bd5?

I imagine it was too simple for a showman like Pillsbury, but 18 Bxc6 was crushing, as Black has to give up his queen or lose the bishop on b7 for nothing.

18...Qc5

Here 18...Qd7 was a tougher way to resist.

19 Rxe8+! Kxe8

Or 19...Rxe8 20 Bd6+ winning the queen.

20 Qxg7 cxd5

Perhaps Pillsbury was hoping for the spectacular finish 20...Rf8 21 Re1+ Kd7 22 Be6+ Ke8 23 Bxf7+ Kd7 24 Be6+ Ke8 25 Bd7 mate.

21 Qxh8+ Kd7 22 Qxh7 Kc8 23 Qxf7 (Diagram 5)

Despite his imprecise play at move 18, White has picked up some material and still has the initiative.

23...d4 24 Qe6+ Rd7 25 Rd1 Qc6 26 Qg8+ Rd8 27 Qg4+ Qd7 28 Qh4 Nc5 29 Be3 Bxg2

A last despairing move two pawns down.

30 Rxd4 1-0

White simplifies and then wins the bishop.

The Pillsbury Attack: An aggressive response to passive play

Harry Nelson Pillsbury, who was one of the absolutely best players in the world between 1895 and 1903, is also one of the greatest heroes in the history of the Queen's Gambit Declined. Or perhaps I should say anti-heroes as he introduced some of the most effective means of attacking it!

Here we see the eponymous Pillsbury Attack – an aggressive scheme with Ne5 and f2-f4 which has pervaded a lot of openings beside the Queen's Gambit. The American also pioneered the Minority Attack, which is central to any discussion of the Exchange Variation.

Game 6

H.Pillsbury **D.Janowski**

Vienna 1898

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Rc1 Nbd7 7 Nf3 b6

This is enough to make a modern player wince. Nowadays Black would most likely strengthen the barrier against the rook on c1 with 7...c6 – see Chapter Four.

The attempt to play in the style of the Tartakower just leads Black into a passive position.



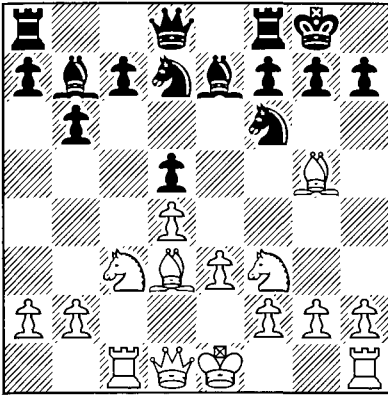
NOTE: The Tartakower is good, the Classical is good – but don't mix the two together.

8 cxd5! exd5

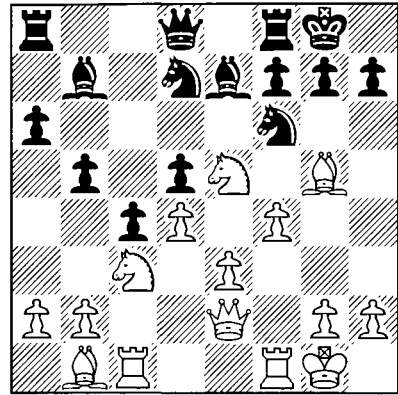
Of course 8...Nxd5 drops a pawn after 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Rxc7 or 9...Bxg5 10 Nxc7.

9 Bd3 Bb7 (Diagram 6)

Black now has a dismal version of the Tartakower, where his bishop is shut in on b7 and he hasn't managed to achieve any relief by exchanging a couple of pieces with ...Nxd5.

**Diagram 6 (W)**

Black has a poor Tartakower

**Diagram 7 (B)**

The Pillsbury Attack

10 0-0 c5

Nevertheless, it is all very well saying that Black has played it wrong, but what is White supposed to be doing? Black has a clear plan: he wants to bypass the white d4-pawn with 11...c4, then utilize his queenside pawn majority with 12...a6, 13...b5, etc. It seems terribly slow, but once Black gets in ...b5-b4, driving the knight from c3, the attack will start to have an impact.

11 Qe2 c4 12 Bb1 a6 13 Ne5

White reveals his plan: the knight is stationed on e5 and then supported by f2-f4. This type of set-up is now known as the Pillsbury Attack.

13...b5 14 f4 (Diagram 7)

With a very double-edged position. White can attack on the kingside with Rf3 etc., while Black presses ahead on the queenside.

14...h6?

A dubious move.



WARNING: A pawn move without a clear purpose should always be condemned – Emanuel Lasker.

Black could have manoeuvred so as to evict the knight from e5 with a sequence such as 14...Re8, 15...Nf8 (adding another guard to h7) and 16...Ne4. Then he would be ready to evict the knight from e5 with ...f7-f6. Of course, White wouldn't sit still while this was happening and could start an attack with 15 Rf3 etc.

Having played 14...h6, the idea of arranging an eventual ...f7-f6 loses its attraction

for Black because the white knight could jump into the hole created on g6.

15 Bh4 Re8 16 Rf3 Ne4 17 Bxe7 Qxe7 18 Bxe4 dxe4 19 Rg3 (Diagram 8)

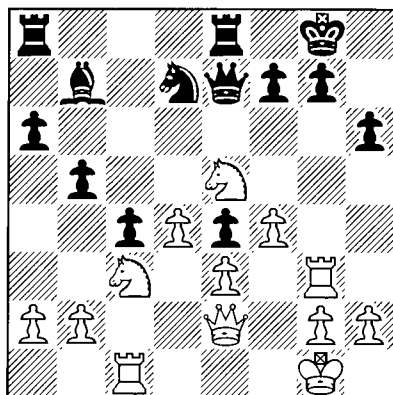


Diagram 8 (B)

Planning a kingside attack?

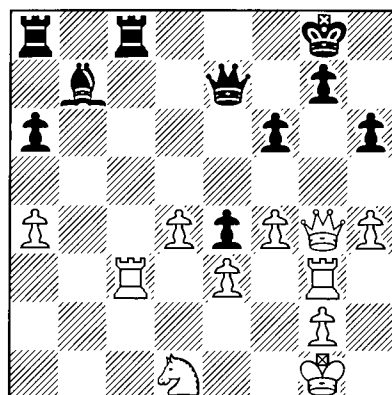


Diagram 9 (B)

White is a pawn up

If now 19...f6 White has a very strong sequence that exploits the hole on g6: 20 Ng6 Qe6 (or 20...Qf7 21 f5 with ideas of 22 Nh4 and then 23 Ne6 or 23 Nh5 is strong) 21 f5! Qxf5 22 Rf1 Qe6 23 Nh4! and Black will be murdered after 24 Nf5 threatening both g7 and h6, with 25 Qh5 also looming. If Black hadn't made the gratuitous weakening move 14...h6 the white knight would have had to retreat to g4 in this sequence after ...f7-f6, when the black kingside remains impenetrable.

In the game, Janowski decided to strengthen his kingside with...

19...Nf6

But then an unexpected blow landed on the queenside:

20 a4!

Black cannot support his b5-pawn, since 20...Qb4 21 Ng4! Nxg4 22 Qxg4 gives White a dangerous attack.

20...b4 21 Nd1 c3

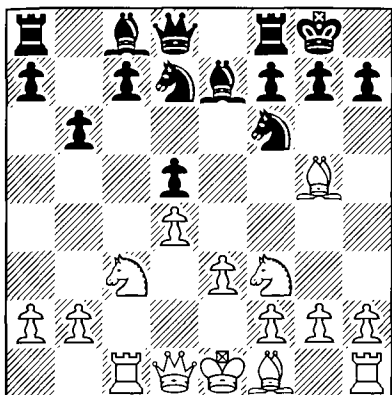
The pawn is lost anyhow.

22 bxc3 bxc3 23 Rxc3 Rec8 24 Ng4 Nxg4 25 Qxg4 f6 26 h4 (Diagram 9)

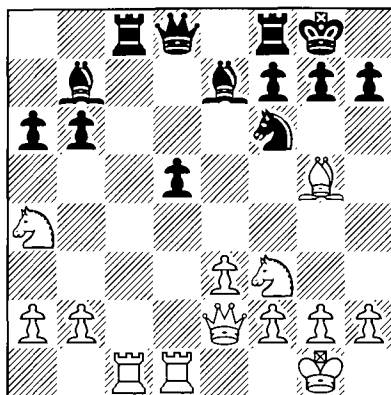
And despite Janowski's stubborn resistance **White won** on move 45.

Capablanca's positional response to passive play

We should return to the position after **8...exd5 (Diagram 10)**

**Diagram 10 (W)**

Position after 8...exd5

**Diagram 11 (B)**

White is in control

Here Capablanca came up with a much simpler and more convincing plan for White, namely:

9 Bb5!?

In J.Capablanca-R.Teichmann, Berlin 1913, Black succeeded in advancing ...c7-c5 but it didn't do him much good:

9...Bb7 10 0-0 a6 11 Ba4 Rc8 12 Qe2 c5 13 dxc5 Nxc5

After 13...bxc5 14 Rfd1 the hanging pawns are under great pressure, but this was how Black should have fought it out.

14 Rfd1 Nxa4 15 Nxa4 (Diagram 11)

And the isolated pawn and bad bishop on b7 were enough to seal Black's fate against the positional maestro Capablanca. The Cuban's move instantly superseded the Pillsbury treatment.

Should we therefore dismiss the Pillsbury Attack as a historical curiosity: the second best way to meet a variation that Black never plays any more?

Not at all! It's true that we are unlikely ever to see again the 'pure' line of the Pillsbury Attack in a modern tournament, but the spirit of his plan lives on. It shows us what to do in all sorts of lines of the Queen's Gambit where Black has played passively. It tells us to utilize the plan of Ne5 and f2-f4!

Finally, here is a game in which a modern Grandmaster managed to combine elements of both the Pillsbury Attack and the Capablanca method:

Game 7

□ V.Chekhov ■ M.Glienke

German League 1994

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Nf3 0-0 7 Rc1 b6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 Bb5 Bb7 10 0-0 a6 11 Ba4 Rc8 12 Ne5!

So that if 12...c6 13 f4 and we have the Pillsbury set-up.

12...Nxe5 13 dxe5 Nd7 14 Bf4 Nc5 15 Bc2 Ne6 16 Qd3! (Diagram 12)

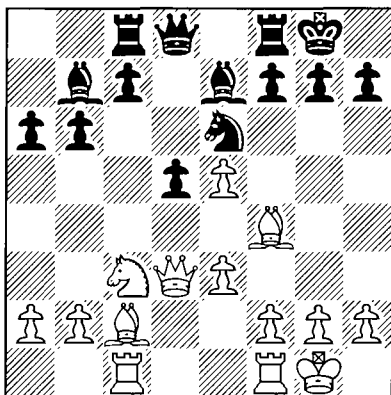


Diagram 12 (B)

Provoking a weakness

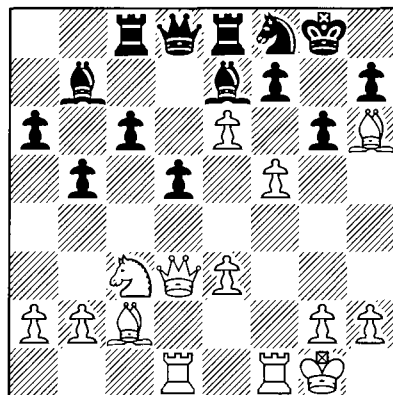


Diagram 13 (B)

Smashing his way in

A crude one move threat of mate, but it has the purpose of opening up the h6-square for the white bishop. That in turn will allow the f-pawn to advance and instigate the final attack.

16...g6 17 Bh6 Re8 18 Rcd1 c6 19 f4 b5

This move is far too deep for me to understand. Black had to slow down the white attack with 19...f5!, though White can press onwards with 20 g4!?

20 f5 Nf8 21 e6! (Diagram 13)

Breaking open the f-file, denying the black knight the e6-square, and clearing the d4-square for the white queen.

21...fxe6 22 fxe6!

My source for this game gives the moves as 22 fxe6 Bf6 23 Bxf8 1-0, which is an inexplicable resignation. I believe Chekhov actually took the pawn on g6, which is much stronger.

22...Bf6

After 22...Nxc6 23 Qd4! (threatening mate on g7) 23...e5 24 Qg4 Qd6 25 Ne4! Qc7 26 Qe6+ Kh8 27 Rf7 followed by 28 Bg7+ and wins.

23 Bxf8 1-0

This resignation needs no explanation, as if 23 Bxf8 Rxf8 24 g7 threatens both the rook and the h7-square.

Hanging pawns

The first exploration: why Black needs ...h7-h6

The subject of *hanging pawns* is very important in the Tartakower. For an initial discussion, please refer to the section 'pawn structures in the Queen's Gambit Declined' in Chapter One.

Game 8

W.Steinitz **A.Anderssen**

Vienna 1873

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 b6 7 Bd3 Bb7 8 0-0 Nbd7

Very modern play! With the moves ...h7-h6 and Bh4 thrown in, 9 Rc1 c5 would mimic games by the likes of Fischer, Petrosian, Tal, Spassky and Smyslov. Under the slightly changed circumstances, Steinitz finds something better.

9 cxd5! exd5

9...Nxd5 would equalize comfortably with the moves ...h7-h6 and Bh4 interposed, but here it runs into problems after 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Nxd5 Bxd5 12 Qc2! (**Diagram 14**) with a double attack on c7 and h7.



WARNING: the double attack by the white queen on c7 and, allied with the bishop, on h7 is a very common trap. Always watch out for it!

Hence we see why modern players prefer 6...h6 in the opening.

10 Rc1 c5 11 dxc5

A rather premature exchange to modern eyes as it hands the black pieces the b6-square. Instead the probing 11 Bf5!? keeps an edge. White wouldn't have to be afraid of 11...c4 as 12 Ne5, planning 13 f4 in some cases, gives White a grip on the centre. Nevertheless, we shouldn't be overcritical of Steinitz wanting to establish the hanging pawns immediately, as it wasn't until about 20 years after this game

that Pillsbury first demonstrated the power of Ne5 and f2-f4 in response to ...c5-c4.

11...bxc5 (Diagram 15)

The hanging pawns have appeared.

12 Qa4?

Clearing the d1-square for Rfd1 to increase the pressure on the black centre pawns. Unfortunately this cannot be recommended and should be replaced with something like 12 Bb5 – as played exactly one hundred years after the present game by a young Dutchman called Jan Timman.

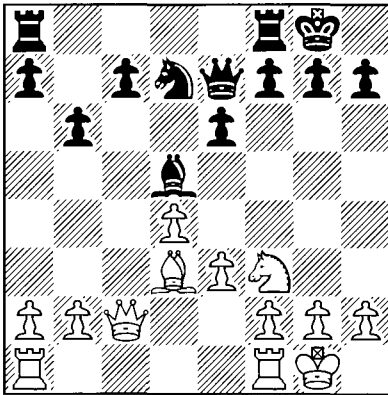


Diagram 14 (B)

A double attack

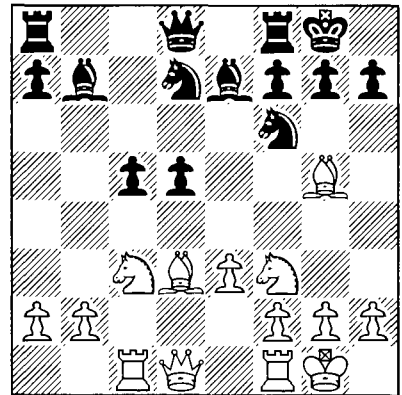


Diagram 15 (W)

Black has hanging pawns

12...Ne4?

Anderssen was a great tactician, but clearly he is uncomfortable in this unfamiliar set-up. In trying to free his game, he makes a bad blunder.

Black should have pounced in the centre with 12...d4!, when after 13 exd4 Bxf3 14 gxf3 Nb6 followed by 15...cxd4 White has no compensation for his smashed up kingside. Evidently Anderssen, who could perform the most amazing acts with the pieces, was less attuned to the needs of his pawn structure. Still, we shouldn't be too judgemental on either Steinitz or Anderssen, who were both groping in the dark as far as finding the correct strategy is concerned. Modern players got the idea of ...d5-d4 from games such as Petrosian-Spassky given later in the chapter – games the old masters could never have seen at the dawn of the Queen's Gambit.

13 Bxe4 dxe4 14 Rfd1! (Diagram 16)

A deadly move – and is the reason the white queen chose a4!

14...Bxg5

If 14...exf3 15 Rxd7 wins a piece.

15 N_xg5 Q_xg5 16 R_xd7 R_fb8 17 Q_b3 (Diagram 17)

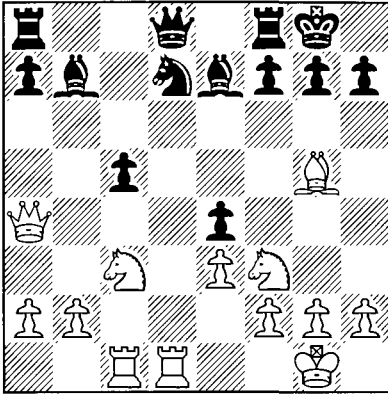


Diagram 16 (B)

Storming down the d-file

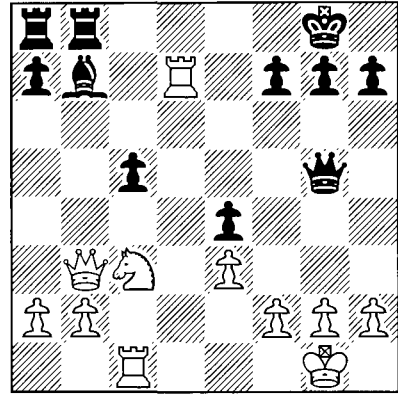


Diagram 17 (B)

Attacking f7 and b7

Attacking both b7 and f7.

17...Bc6 18 Qxf7+ Kh8 19 h4! Qg4 20 Rxa7 Rxa7 21 Qxa7 Rxb2 22 Qxc5

Threatening mate and also the bishop. This is why Steinitz deflected the black queen from g5 with 19 h4. Obviously, even in a strategic game it helps if you can see tactical nuances!

22...Qe6

Meeting both threats, but now the bishop gets into trouble.

23 Rd1! h6 24 Rd6 Qf7 25 Nd1 Re2 26 Kf1 1-0

Hanging pawns: a more sophisticated version

Hanging pawns are targets, but we mustn't forget that there are semi-open files on either side of them that help the defender generate play with his rooks and queen. The hanging pawns themselves feed dynamism to their pieces with their control of a large number of centre squares and their ability to advance suddenly – think what damage they would have done if Anderssen had played 12...d4!.

Generally speaking, the more a position is simplified by exchanges, the more hanging pawns become a liability rather than a strength.

Game 9

□ T.Petrosian ■ B.Spasky

Santa Monica 1966

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 h6!

We are now in the territory of modern theory. Spasky knows that he should throw in this move to help negate White's future pressure down the c-file.

6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 b6 (Diagram 18)

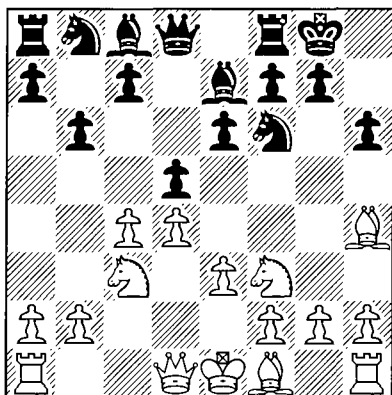


Diagram 18 (W)

The Tartakower starting position

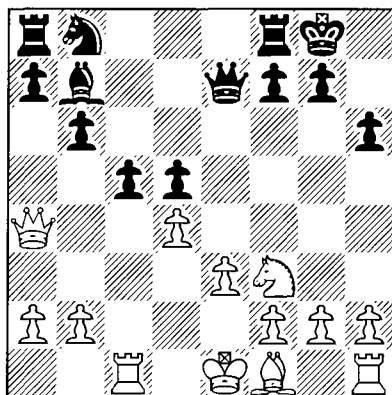


Diagram 19 (W)

Hanging pawns in the making



NOTE: All our subsequent investigations will be from this position. It's important to know something about the moves 8 Rc1, 8 cxd5, 8 Be2 and 8 Bd3.

8 Rc1

White plays in direct style: he puts a rook on c1 and then opens an attack on c7.

8...Bb7 9 cxd5

We shall return to this point later.

9...Nxd5 10 Nxd5 exd5 11 Bxe7 Qxe7 12 Qa4 c5 (Diagram 19) 13 Qa3 Rc8 14 Be2 Nd7 15 0-0 Qf8

The queen retreats a square in order to break the pin on the c5-pawn. This more or less forces White's hand, as a quiet move could now be answered with 16...c4 when Black avoids the hanging pawns. It is worth mentioning that a committal pawn advance such as ...c5-c4 always has to be judged very carefully, as the c4-pawn could subsequently be undermined with b2-b3. But here the circumstances

look favourable for Black, as he could continue his queenside march with ...b6-b5, etc., strengthening the c4-point.

16 dxc5

Petrosian, never a player to miss a positional trick, fixes a target on c5.

16...bxc5

An eternal dilemma: does Black want two hanging pawns or one isolated pawn? Here there isn't much to debate, as 16...Nxc5, while it activates the black knight and brings it in contact with e4 and e6 (two of its favourite squares in the Queen's Gambit), is well answered by 17 Nd4. The white knight is on an ideal post, and smothers any chance that the bishop on b7 will see daylight for a long time.

17 Rc2 (Diagram 20)

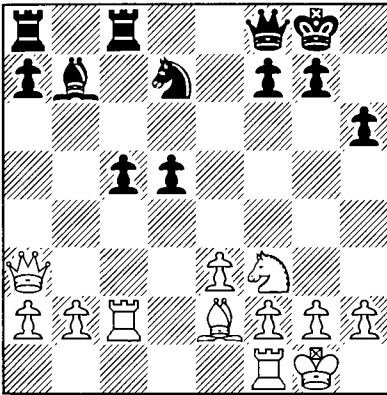


Diagram 20 (B)

The hanging pawns appear

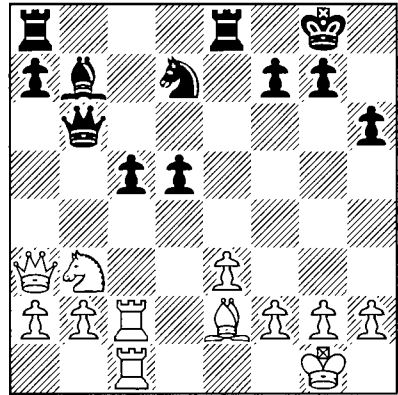


Diagram 21 (B)

What now for Black?

Finally the hanging pawns appear and Petrosian begins to probe them. His plan can be summed up as follows: I will double rooks on the c-file and then play Nd2 and Nb3 when the c5-pawn is attacked four times. This will oblige Black to play ...c5-c4. Then, after exchanging queens and playing Nd4, I can assail the c4-pawn with b2-b3. Upon c4xb3 I recapture a2xb3 and then penetrate with Rc7. Then the weakness of the d5-pawn allied to my more active pieces will give me every winning chance.

However, Spassky rises to the occasion.

17...Qd6!!

A great positional move. I think it was Karpov who was the first to state that every position should be judged on its merits, with no regard to what has happened earlier in the game. Well, Karpov may have said it, but Spassky knew all

about it!

The queen retraces her steps as a great post has appeared for her on b6, and d6 is the way to reach it. There has been no loss of time, despite first appearances, as without the initial retreat to f8 White would have had no compulsion to exchange pawns on c5, thereby opening up the b6-square.

I wonder how many international players, let alone club players, would change their mind with 17...Qd6 here. But then World Champions are special people.

18 Rfc1 Qb6

Here the queen radiates power in all directions. She bolsters c5 and deters any further assault on it with b2-b4, as well as preventing Bb5, which would attack a defender of the pawn. More aggressively speaking, she supports a possible counterattack against b2 in the future with ...Rab8, and the fact that she defends a7 is useful in that regard. Finally, as will be seen in the game, she adds vital dynamism to a pawn thrust in the centre.

19 Nd2

Unruffled, Petrosian continues with his methodical plan. There also looms the unexpected 20 Bg4! when the unstoppable Bxd7 and Rxc5 would win a pawn. Spassky is therefore obliged to move his rook out of the potential pin.

19...Re8 20 Nb3 (Diagram 21)

White's game has reached its high point. After 20...c4 21 Nd4, intending 22 b3, Black would fall into a terrible bind. In fact, even 20...c4 21 Na5!? would be possible, aiming to combine b2-b3 with Nxb7.

Any reader who has played through the best games of Tigran Petrosian will have seen a large number of fine positional crushes. Indeed, Fischer himself talked admiringly about the former World Champion's fatal 'bear hug'.

A game such as this, in which a fellow top-class player saves himself by counterattacking in time, is largely ignored by the writers of books – a quick draw isn't regarded as very interesting. And yet this is a pity, as not only do such games teach us the art of defence, they also emphasize the greatness of Petrosian's achievement when he did manage to pull off his amazing technical wins.

20...d4!!

A key strategical idea in the hanging pawn centre: Black clears the diagonal for his bishop at the cost of a pawn. We suddenly notice that the white pieces, especially the queen, are a long way from the defence of the kingside. Meanwhile, Black to move could attack g2 at once with ...Qg6.

21 Nxc5 Nxc5 22 Rxc5

Here 22 Qxc5 Qg6 would be very awkward for White, as not only is mate threatened on g2, but he also has to contend with 23...d3, forking, or 23...Rac8, with an x-ray attack on c2 through the white queen.

22...dxe3 23 fxe3 Re7

Simply preparing to double rooks against the e-pawn.

24 Rb5

After the game, Petrosian claimed he had simply missed that Black could take the pawn on e3. Perhaps his unconscious mind, with its famous sense of danger, was telling him it was time to force a draw. In any case, with ...Rae8 and ...Qg6 etc. on the horizon, Black had fully enough compensation for the pawn.

24...Qxe3+ 25 Qxe3 Rxe3 26 Rxb7 Rxe2 27 Rcc7 Rd8 28 Rd7 Rc8 29 Rbc7 ½-½

The golden rule of opening play

Even the greatest players are prone to positional and tactical lapses when they are confronted with unforeseen challenges in the opening. Hence there is a perpetual arms race between the top players who are continually trying to 'ambush' each other with new ideas.

It is by no means impossible for the rest of us to make a contribution to theory, but I think our aim should be slightly more modest, at least when starting a new opening: namely, not to make the same mistake in similar circumstances twice.

Spassky was dissatisfied with the outcome of the opening in his game with Petrosian, and began to search for improvements. In a later round of the very same tournament he reached the same position at move 10.

Game 10

□ **M.Najdorf** ■ **B.Spassky**

Santa Monica 1966

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 Rc1 Bb7 9 cxd5 Nxd5 10 Nxd5

Here, rather than 10...exd5, he played:

10...Bxd5! (Diagram 22)

In many cases, recapturing with the bishop is bad, because White can gain space and cramp the black pieces with the pawn advance e3-e4. However, the fact that the position has been simplified by exchanges means that Black is hardly likely to suffer from a lack of room, even if White goes to the trouble of arranging the pawn advance.

11 Bxe7 Qxe7 12 Be2 Rc8

Not 12...Bxa2?? 13 b3 Qb4+ 14 Nd2, when the black bishop is not long for this world.

13 0-0 c5

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

In contrast to his struggles with the hanging pawns in the Petrosian game, here Spassky equalizes effortlessly.

14 Qa4 Nd7 15 Qa3 Kf8 16 Ba6?

A foolish attempt to play actively.

16...Bxf3 17 gxf3

White must accept a broken kingside, since if 17 Bxc8 Qg5! wins.

17...Qg5+ (Diagram 23)

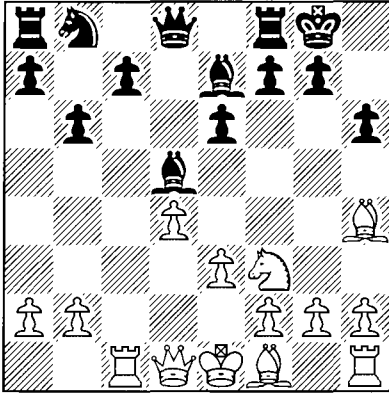


Diagram 22 (W)

Position after 10...Bxd5!

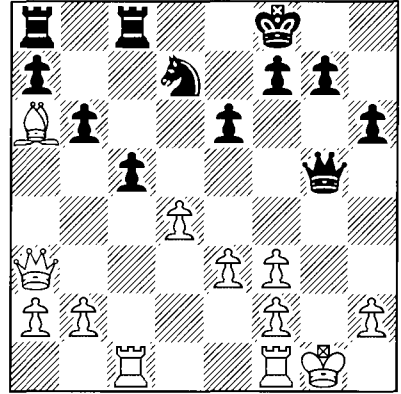


Diagram 23 (W)

Black goes for the draw

Agreeing to a draw, although after 17...Rd8 he could have tried to exploit White's fragile pawns.

18 Kh1 Qh5 19 Bxc8 Qxf3+ 20 Kg1 Qg4+ 21 Kh1 Qf3+ 1/2-1/2

Hanging pawns: Black plays ...Be6!

The plan of 8 Rc1 and 9 cxd5 lost its sting after these two Spassky games, as Black's bishop gains its freedom with 10...Bxd5. Another try for White was to fix the black pawn on d5 straightaway with 8 cxd5, before the bishop had the chance to get to b7.

Game 11

□ M.Bertok ■ R.Fischer

Stockholm Interzonal 1962

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 Bh4 b6 8 cxd5

White has also tried a variety of moves here that delay the setting up of the hanging pawns, such as 8 Be2 and 8 Bd3. These will be examined in the games that follow.

8...Nxd5 (Diagram 24)

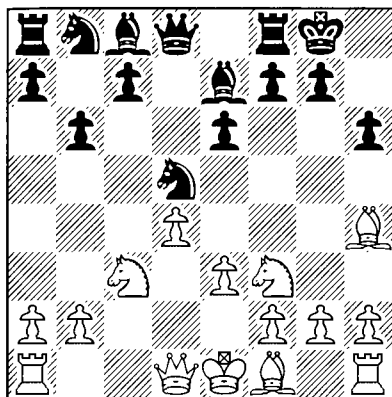


Diagram 24 (W)

Position after 8...Nxd5

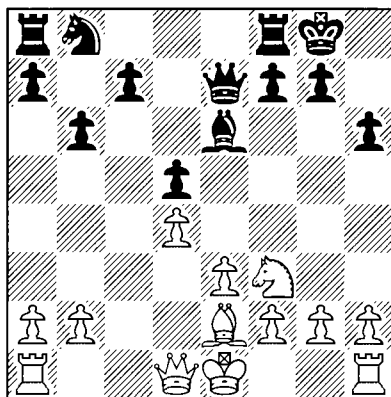


Diagram 25 (W)

The bishop belongs on e6

Actually there is nothing particularly wrong with 8...exd5, when Black can activate his game in the style of Kramnik-Yusupov below (see Game 15) after 9 Bd3 Bb7 10 Rc1 Nbd7 11 0-0 Ne4 12 Bg3 c5 etc. with a complex game. Theory might claim a slight advantage for White, but who cares? If Black is happy with the space and counterchances offered by the hanging pawns, he won't be concerned by their slight vulnerability that theory converts into the sign +=.

Of course, things are different if the verdict is a clear advantage to White, as that means that the theorists think they have detected a drawback to the black position that goes beyond mere suspicion about the hanging pawns. You have to check carefully to see if they are right.

Nonetheless, I must confess I like clarity and would always play 8...Nxd5 to get some pieces off the board. But that's no more than saying I prefer the games of Capablanca (or Fischer!) to those of Alekhine.

9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 Nxd5

White captures before Black has the chance to play ...Bb7, thus denying him the option of recapturing on d5 with the bishop, as occurred after 10 Rc1 Bb7 11 Nxd5 Bxd5 in the Najdorf-Spassky game above.

10...exd5 11 Be2

The sort of respectful move you play against Fischer when he has been crushing everyone in sight. At the Stockholm Interzonal the US legend had notched up 12

wins and 8 draws at this point.

11...Be6! (Diagram 25)

The best square for the bishop. The alternative 11...Bb7 would equally defend the d5-pawn and so facilitate ...c7-c5, but then the bishop would get in the way of any future counterplay against b2 based on ...Rab8 etc. and also be vulnerable to attack in some lines.



TIP: If you have the choice between going to e6 or b7 in the Tartakower, and you can't decide which way, ...Be6 is almost certainly the right move.

12 0-0 c5 13 dxc5 bxc5

The by now familiar pawn structure has emerged.

14 Qa4 Qb7 15 Qa3 Nd7 16 Ne1 a5!

An excellent move. The white queen is further boxed in and has to reckon with ...Qb4! when the exchange Qxb4 ...a5xb4 greatly invigorates the black pawns, while letting Black take the queens off on a3 will double White's pawns and make c5 into a passed pawn.

17 Nd3 c4! (Diagram 26)

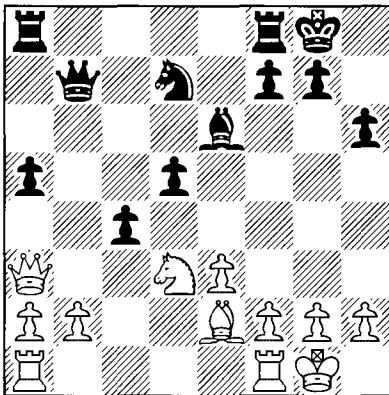


Diagram 26 (W)

Black targets the b2-pawn

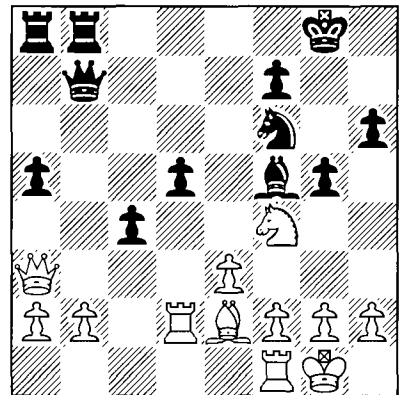


Diagram 27 (W)

Planning to follow with ...Ne4

Normally we would frown upon this advance, as the hanging pawns lose their flexibility and a whopping hole appears on d4. However, Fischer has seen that he can gain decisive pressure against the b2-pawn by disrupting its defence. This strategy depends on the fact that the white minor pieces are on very poor squares, especially the knight.

Try a little experiment: swap the white knight and bishop around, so that the bishop is on d3 and the knight on e2. Then things are far healthier for White, as the bishop can retreat to c2, stopping Black playing ...Bf5, and the knight can go to d4.

As things stand – put the knight back on d3, bishop on e2 please! – the pawn advance drives the knight away from its defence of b2, and also makes possible ...Bf5, which prevents the pawn being guarded by Rab1.

18 Nf4 Rfb8!

Not 18...Qb4?? 19 Qxb4 axb4 20 e4! when it's all gone wrong for Black, in view of 20...dxe4 21 Nxe6 fxe6 22 Bxc4.

19 Rab1?

Just losing time. Fischer suggests 19 Nxe6 fxe6 20 Bg4 Ra6 21 b3!, sacrificing a pawn, as the best drawing chance. Yes, it's already that bad for White, and his only crime has been to play too passively.

19...Bf5 20 Rbd1 Nf6 21 Rd2 g5! (Diagram 27)

Another 'anti-positional' pawn attack on the knight! The first (17...c4) 'weakened' the black centre, the second 'weakens' the kingside. Of course, everything has to go in inverted commas, as when Black has such a strong initiative it is irrelevant to talk of structural weaknesses.



NOTE: You can't judge a position purely on the strength or otherwise of a pawn structure. Far more important is how well the pieces are coordinated.

22 Nxd5

A desperate sacrifice, but if 22 Nh5 Ne4 23 Rc2 Qb4! (Fischer). Then after 24 Qxb4 axb4 the hanging pawns have become a terrible trio that smash through the queenside: 25 Ra1 b3 26 Rcc1 c3! and White can't escape losing a rook to a fork on b2.

22...Nxd5 23 Bxc4 Be6 24 Rfd1 Nxe3

Deadly simplification with the threat of mate on g2.

25 Qxe3 Bxc4 26 h4 Re8 27 Qg3 Qe7 28 b3 Be6 29 f4 g4 30 h5 Qc5+ 31 Rf2 Bf5 0-1

Another failed attempt to make 8 cxd5 work

Game 12

□ J.Timman ■ E.Geller

Hilversum 1973

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 h6 7 Bh4 b6 8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 Nxd5 exd5 11 Rc1

Rather more aggressive than 11 Be2.

11...Be6 12 Qa4 c5

The alternative 12...a5!? carries the positional threat of 13...Qb4+!, forcing the exchange of queens in a very unpleasant way for White. Then 13 Rc3 Rc8 14 Bd3 c5 etc. looks fine for Black.

13 Qa3 Rc8 14 Bb5? (Diagram 28)

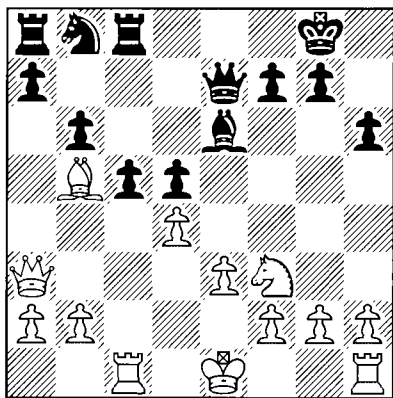


Diagram 28 (B)

What should Black play?

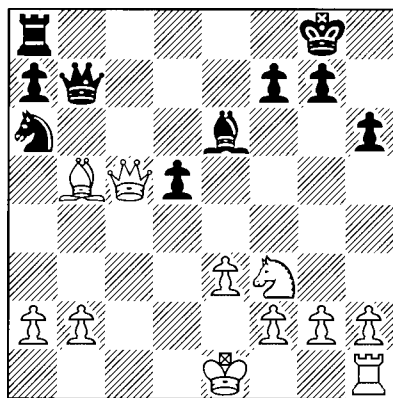


Diagram 29 (W)

All part of the plan

After the blood, sweat and toil of some world class Grandmasters, we can conclude that White should prefer 14 Be2, though it doesn't set Black any problems; e.g. 14...a5 15 0-0 Qa7 (getting out of the pin) 16 dxc5 bxc5 followed by 17...Nd7.

14...Qb7!

A hidden tactical resource that not only ruins White's winning attempt, but forces him to think how to equalize!

Earlier Fischer had essayed 14 Bb5 against Spassky in their 1972 World Championship match. It had been a relatively new move at the time and, as usual, the effect of surprise far outweighed the actual merits of the move, as Spassky replied 14...a6!?. Fischer went on to win a famous game after 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 0-0 Ra7 17 Be2 Nd7 18 Nd4! Qf8?! (better to head for the endgame with 18...Nf6 19 Nb3 c4 even though it's ugly) 19 Nxe6 fxe6 20 e4 d4?! 21 Bc4 etc., R.Fischer-B.Spassky, 6th matchgame, Reykjavik 1972.

A bad line often escapes criticism because it has a fantastic success in a big name game (and you don't get much bigger than Fischer-Spassky, Reykjavik 1972). But believe me, Geller's move 14...Qb7 refutes White's plan.

15 dxc5

Or else 15...c4 shuts out the white pieces.

15...bxc5 16 Rxc5 Rxc5 17 Qxc5 Na6! (Diagram 29)

Now White has no choice but to take the knight, as after 18 Qc6 Qxc6 19 Bxc6 Rb8! White can't prevent 20...Rxb2 when he is in dire straits on the queenside, since if 20 b3? Rc8 wins the bishop (with the pawn on b3, White no longer has the response Ba4 to answer ...Rc1+ with Bd1).

18 Bxa6 Qxa6 19 Qa3 Qc4!

White has an extra pawn, but the fact that he cannot castle causes him serious difficulties.

20 Kd2?

A bad mistake. Black is only slightly better after 20 Qc3 Rb8! or 20...Qxa2!?.

20...Qg4 21 Rg1 d4! (Diagram 30)

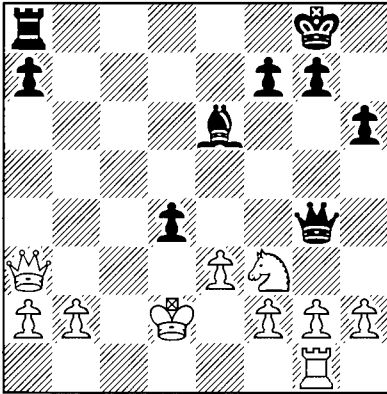


Diagram 30 (W)

The key pawn thrust

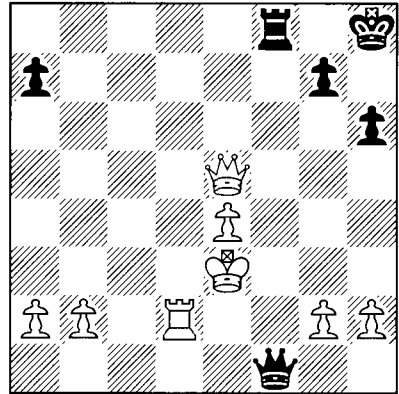


Diagram 31 (B)

Now Black wins by force

Once again this explosive pawn advance is the key to the position.

22 Nxd4 Qh4 23 Re1

If 23 Rf1 Bc4 picks up the f2-pawn, while after 24 Ke1 Black can play 24...Rc8 or 24...Qxh2 at his leisure as the white king is not going anywhere.

23...Qxf2+ 24 Re2 Qf1 25 Nxe6 fxe6

White is a pawn up, but he faces a gruesome defensive task. In fact only a computer would have a realistic chance of dealing with all the threats.

26 Qd6 Kh8 27 e4 Rc8 28 Ke3 Rf8 29 Rd2 e5!

With the intention of keeping up the pressure with 30...Qf4+ 31 Kd3 Rf6.

30 Qxe5 (Diagram 31)

Finally it all proves too much for White. The pawn snatch loses by force as the queen needed to stay on the d-file to ward off the black rook.

30...Qe1+ 31 Re2 Qg1+ 32 Kd3 Rd8+ 33 Kc3 Qd1 34 Qb5 Qd4+ 35 Kc2 a6!

The third pawn sacrifice clinches the point.

36 Qxa6 Qc5+ 0-1

It is mate in one if the king goes to b1, and in three moves following 37 Kb3 Rb8+ etc.

The USSR Grandmaster Efim Geller was one of the greatest practitioners of the Queen's Gambit.

White plays 9 Bxf6

White tries to restrain ...c7-c5 with his pieces

At the time of writing, due to the possibility (after 8 cxd5 etc.) of 11...Be6 in the games above, White often waits for the black bishop to go b7 and then plays Bxf6 and c4xd5, keeping it shut in.

Game 13

□ M. Illescas Cordoba ■ N. Short

Pamplona 1999

1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 Be2 Bb7 9 Bxf6 (Diagram 32)

The aforementioned 'anti-bishop on b7' measure. White is willing to give up the bishop pair in order to prevent Black simplifying and freeing his bishop after 9 cxd5 Nxd5 etc.

9...Bxf6 10 cxd5 exd5

I always find it rather ironic that Black repeatedly complains about having a bad light-squared bishop in the Queen's Gambit, but no power on earth will induce him to give it up for a knight after, say, 10...Bxd5 (allowing 11 Nxd5) – and rightly so, as White has an edge on the light squares that lasts forever. It seems that the old adage that the worst bishop is better than the best knight holds true!

11 0-0 Qe7 12 Qb3

This looks rather strange, but it is in fact very logical. White wants to make ...c7-c5 as unattractive for Black as possible. Hence he puts his queen on a square where she not only directly attacks d5, but also potentially threatens b7.



NOTE: Black has the two bishops, so White wants to avoid the opening of lines.

12...Rd8 (Diagram 33)

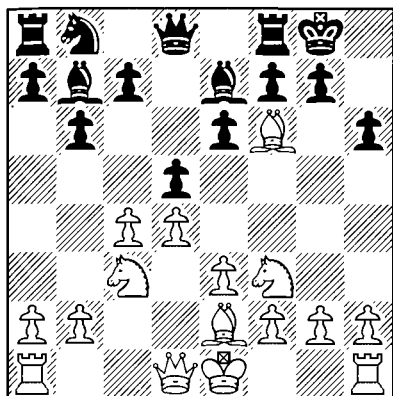


Diagram 32 (B)

White plays 9 Bxf6

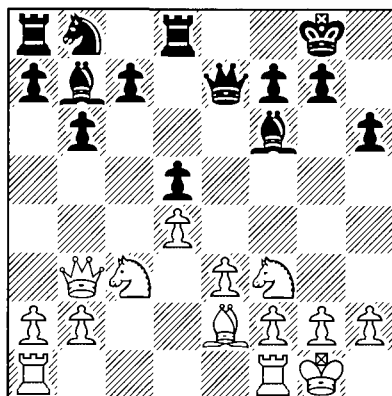


Diagram 33 (W)

Black prepares ...c7-c5

An interesting moment. As so often in the Tartakower, Black has to decide whether or not to counterattack immediately against the white centre. After 13...c5 he would set up hanging pawns with all their attendant risks and possibilities; while the solid 13...c6 would be much safer, but also give White the opportunity to build up quietly.

Let's suppose White plays 13 Rad1. Now after 13...c6, he could try for the advance e3-e4 to break open the centre, exploiting the fact that he can play 14 Rfe1 without loss of time, and then Bd3 and e3-e4. Since Black has shut in the bishop with ...c7-c6, losing its influence over e4, this scheme has clearly received a boost.

Because of this, Black's alternative plan of 13...c5 looks preferable: for example 14 dxc5 Bxc3 (a necessary intermediate move or else d5 would drop – see how this is so) 15 Qxc3 bxc5 16 Ne5! (a very useful move in the hanging pawn centre: White prepares to eliminate the black knight as soon as it is developed, based on the principle that the hanging pawns get weaker as the endgame approaches) 16...Nd7 17 Nxd7 Rxd7 18 Bg4 Rc7 19 Rd2 Rd8 20 Rc1 Rd6 (**Diagram 34**) and White can claim some pressure on the pawns, but on the other hand the black pieces are all active and just waiting for the chance to land a tactical blow, e.g. 21 b4? Rdc6! 22 b5 d4! followed by ...Rg6 with tremendous play, since if 23 exd4? cxd4 wins at once for Black.

Now let's turn to 13 Rfd1. It's almost the same, you might think. But here, after

13...c5 14 dxc5 etc., White can bring his rook to immediately attack along the c-file with Rxc1 (whereas he would lose a move after 13 Rad1 and then Rc1). The bad news for White is that if Black plays the alternative 13...c6, he would lose a move playing 14 Rde1 to support the e3-e4 advance.

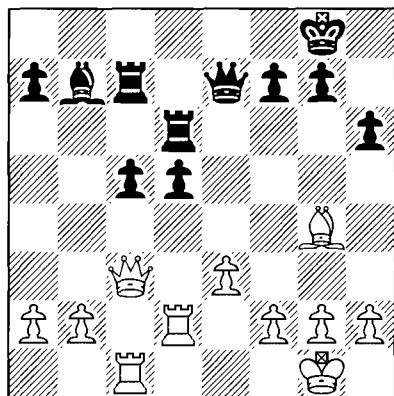


Diagram 34 (W)

A dynamic imbalance

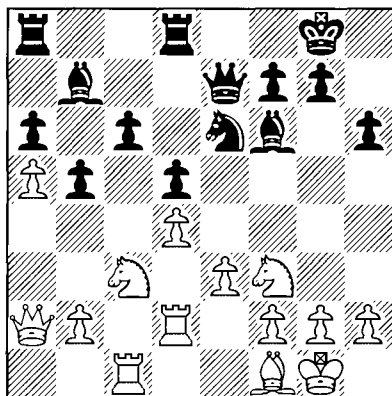


Diagram 35 (B)

Time for action

13 Rfd1 c6

The best move according to the reasoning above.

14 Bf1 Na6!?

The knight begins a three move manoeuvre to its best post on e6. Such long range, schematic play is possible with a fixed centre. Meanwhile, White tries to puncture a hole in the black queenside.

15 Rd2 Nc7 16 a4 Ne6

Mission accomplished. The black knight, queen and king's bishop now form a compact group characteristic of the Tartakower Defence.

17 a5 b5!

Black keeps his queenside solid. If now 18 a6 Bc8 and Black can regroup with ...Bd7, ...Rac8 etc., angling for ...c6-c5. The pawn on a6 would just be a weakness.

18 Qa2 a6 19 Rc1 (Diagram 35)

If this game had been played in 1909 rather than 1999, the critic would be quick to condemn Black for leaving a hole on the c5-square and giving himself such a bad bishop on b7. At the same time he would lavish praise on Tarrasch, Schlechter or Rubinstein or whoever else was playing White, as they gradually took control of c5 with moves like Rdc2, Ne1, Nd3, Ne2 and Nc5.

Meanwhile the minor master playing Black would just quietly watch as White slowly improved his position. He would never ever dream of counterattacking. No, his role was to lose in slow, painful style to a great master as an atonement for his strategical sins.

An exaggeration? Of course. But playing through old games, it is easy to see that the concept of a sudden switch from patient defence to dynamic counterattack was little understood. How else, for example, could Adolf Anderssen, who made brilliant and deeply calculated sacrifices in the King's Gambit, fail to see the strength of the centre break ...d5-d4 in his game with Steinitz given above?

In contrast, Nigel Short, the strong modern Grandmaster who played a match for the World Championship in 1993, is fully aware of the 'energy' stored in his well-coordinated pieces.

19...c5!

Brilliant, but entirely logical. Here are two justifications for this ambitious break-out: firstly, Black has an ascendancy over the dark squares because his bishop on f6 has no rival in the white camp; and, secondly, the white queen is rather shut out of things on a2.

20 dxc5

He had to make do with 20 g3, when Short intended 20...c4 with a powerful phalanx of pawns on the queenside – the proverbial ugly duckling on c6 becoming a swan on c4.

20...d4

The black centre burst forwards with such power that White can no longer save himself.

21 Nxd4

White caves in after 21 exd4 Bxf3 22 gxf3 Bg5!.

21...Bxd4 22 exd4 Nxd4 23 Kh1 Nf3!! (Diagram 36)

Black can finish the game with a flashy attack because he is essentially a queen up when it comes to events on the kingside.

24 Rxd8+ Rxd8 25 c6

If 25 gxf3 Bxf3+ 26 Bg2 Bxg2+ 27 Kxg2 Qg5+ and the queen picks up the rook on c1.

25...Bxc6 26 Ne2 Qh4! 27 gxf3 Qxf2 28 Nf4

After 28 Rxc6 Short gives a pretty finish: 28...Qxf1+ 29 Ng1 Rd1 30 Rg6 (using the pin on f7 to stay alive a little longer) 30...Qxf3+ 31 Rg2 Qe4!! (getting the queen out of range of the white knight, so that 32...Rd2 is a killer threat) 32 b3 Rxf1+! 33 Kxg1 Qe1 mate!

28...Bxf3+ 29 Bg2 Rd2 30 Rg1 Be4! 0-1 (Diagram 37)

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

A nice quiet move to end with. Black picks up the knight on f4 for nothing and is then material up with a still decisive attack.

A really great game by Nigel Short.

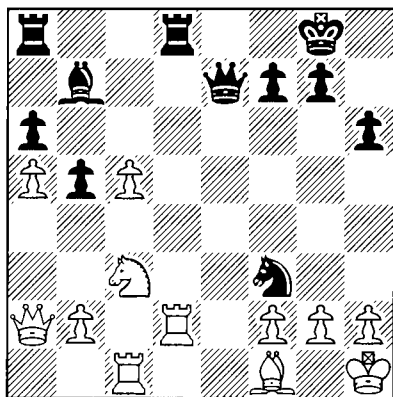


Diagram 36 (W)

Starting a flashy attack

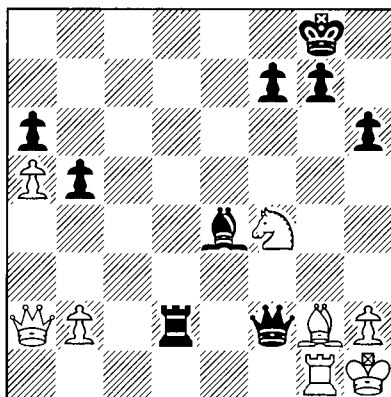


Diagram 37 (W)

And White resigned

White tries to restrain ...c7-c5 with his pawns

Game 14

□ V.Topalov ■ V.Kramnik

Linares 1998

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 Be2 Bb7 9 Bxf6 Bxf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 (Diagram 38)

Another way for White to contest the ...c7-c5 advance.

11...c6

I recall 11...c5 occurring in some of the Karpov-Kasparov encounters. Then after 12 bxc5 bxc5 White had better not play 13 dxc5??, but he can keep a tiny, rather annoying, advantage with 13 Rb1 (**Diagram 39**). For example, 13...Qa5 14 Qd2 (naturally swapping b7 for c3 would be a relief for Black) 14...cxd4 15 Nxd4 Bxd4 16 exd4 Ba6 17 Nb5 Qd8 18 0-0 Nc6 19 Rfd1 Qf6 and Black is very close to equality but not quite; or 13...Bc6 14 0-0 Nd7 15 Bb5 Qc7 16 Qa4 Nb6 17 Qa5 cxd4 18 exd4 and again there is a small amount of pressure for Black to worry about.

Although I can sympathize with the Ks wanting to play like this in a World

Championship match, where every draw with Black is worth its weight in gold, I think this would be a hideous way for the rest of us to defend the position. Zero winning chances and maybe 15% losing chances – is this why we play the Queen's Gambit? It's so much more interesting to keep the tension with 11...c6, and as you will see, you might even win against Topalov!

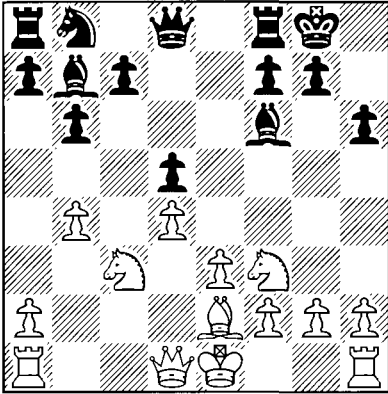


Diagram 38 (B)

White tries to restrain ...c7-c5

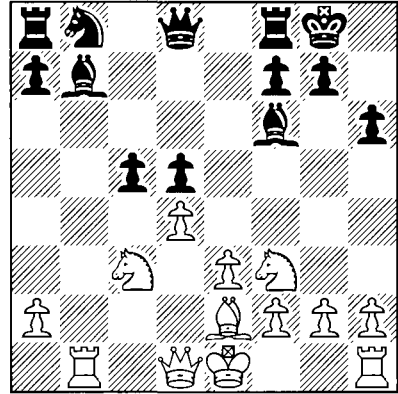


Diagram 39 (B)

Black has not equalized

12 0-0 a5

Eminently logical, even though it invites White to hit the c6-pawn in the style of the Minority Attack. The key battle is over the c5-square, and once the b-pawn has been cajoled forwards, the advance ...c6-c5 becomes more attractive for Black

13 b5

After 13 a3 axb4 14 axb4 b5!? the white pawn would be fixed as a potential target on b4, and the manoeuvre ...Nd7, ...Nb6 and ...Nc4 would follow. White always has to watch out for the possibility of ...b7-b5 (or ...b6-b5) combined with ...Nc4 when he has a weak c4-square. As a rule, it will only be viable for Black to play like this when White can't disrupt things with a powerful e3-e4 advance.

13...c5

It's important that it took two moves for the pawn to reach c5, otherwise White could play 14 b5xc6 en passant, leaving Black with weak pawns on b6 and d5.

14 Re1 Re8 15 Rc1 Nd7 16 g3

White decides to improve the strategic layout of his pieces by transferring the bishop to g2, where it adds to the potential attack on d5.

Instead 16 dxc5 inflicts an IQP on Black, but after 16...Nxc5 17 Nd4 Qd6 the black

knight is very well entrenched on c5.

16...Nf8! (Diagram 40)

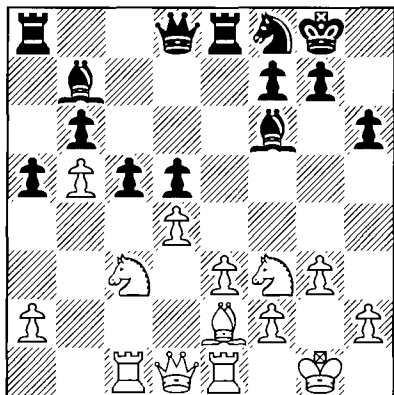


Diagram 40 (W)

The knight heads for e6

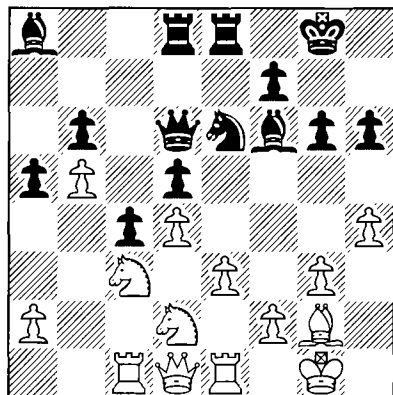


Diagram 41 (W)

Dynamic equilibrium

Meanwhile the black knight heads for e6. You may recall its strength on this square in the Illescas-Short game above.

17 Na4

Topalov therefore forces Black to relinquish his pressure on d4 before it can be increased by the black knight.

17...c4

Instead 17...cxd4? 18 Nxd4, when White has Nc6, would be positional surrender by Black.

18 Bf1 Qd6 19 Bg2 Rad8 20 h4 Ne6 21 Nc3 g6 22 Nd2 Ba8 (Diagram 41)

Meeting the tactical threat of 23 Nxc4. Now a state of dynamic equilibrium has been reached. The advance e3-e4, aiming to undermine c4, can hardly hope to succeed – in fact it would be a dream come true for Black's well-centralized pieces! Therefore Topalov decides to advance his kingside pawns, but only succeeds in weakening them.

23 h5?

Actually there was still one reasonable pawn advance on the cards: 23 f4 in the style of Pillsbury's Attack. Then after 23...Ng7 (to deter a future f4-f5) 24 Nf3, followed by 25 Ne5, leads to interesting play.

23...g5! 24 Nf1 Be7 25 g4?

Now White's plan becomes clear: he wants to put the knight on f5 via g3. How-

ever, it is child's play for Kramnik to defeat the idea, after which all White has achieved is a serious loosening of his kingside pawns.

25...Qd7! 26 Ng3 Ng7 27 a4 Bb4

The beginning of a series of curious manoeuvres with this bishop. Evidently Kramnik knows he is playing an all-action opponent, and so is content to let White ruin his own position on the kingside in peace.

28 Bh3 Bb7 29 Qc2 Bd6 30 Nf5 Nxf5 31 gxf5 Bb4 32 Kg2 Qd6 33 f3 Re7 34 Re2 Rde8 (Diagram 42)

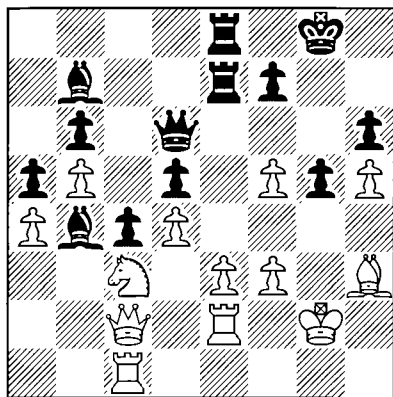


Diagram 42 (W)

White is strategically lost

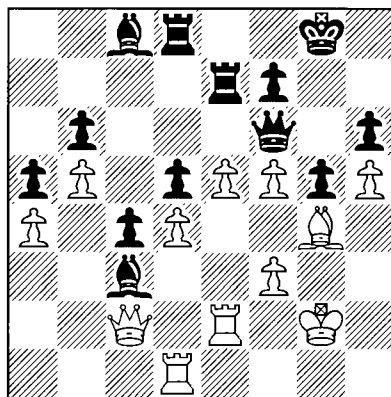


Diagram 43 (B)

Black to play and win

The Queen's Gambit at its best: Black has made a series of precise centralizing and consolidating moves, and suddenly finds himself with a strategically winning position.

35 Rce1 Qf6

The most direct way to decide the struggle is to get the bishop to c7 and the queen to d6, followed by an invasion on g3. But Kramnik is still in no hurry. Once again he has judged correctly that White is going to make things easier for him by trying to gain counterplay.

36 Bg4 Bd6 37 Qd1 Bb4 38 Qc2 Rd8 39 Rd1 Bc8 40 e4 Bxc3 41 e5 (Diagram 43)
41...Rxe5!

Giving up the exchange to gain invincible connected passed pawns.

42 dxe5

Or 42 Rxe5 Bxd4!

42...Bxe5 43 Rde1 Bc7 44 Re8+ Kg7 45 Rxd8 Bxd8 46 Rd1 Bb7 47 f4 d4+ 48 Bf3 d3

0-1

A possible finish is 49 Qxc4 Qb2+ 50 Kg3 Bxf3 51 Kxf3 Qe2+ 52 Kg3 Qxd1 53 Qd4+ Bf6 etc.

White plays quietly

After some great successes in this chapter, Black comes down with a bump in the next game. Of course it is healthy to be reminded that the Tartakower doesn't win by force for Black.

Game 15

□ **V.Kramnik** ■ **A.Yusupov**

Dortmund 1998

1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 Bd3

At first glance this doesn't appear to be a very ambitious approach for White, as he is content to develop his pieces and then try to find a gap in Black's armour. However, don't be deceived by appearances: Black has to play precisely, as the focus of White's attack could shift between squares as diverse as a6, d5 and h7.

8...Bb7 9 0-0 Nbd7 10 Qe2 (Diagram 44)

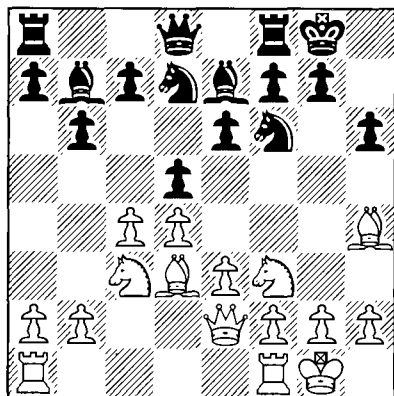


Diagram 44 (B)

White is slightly better

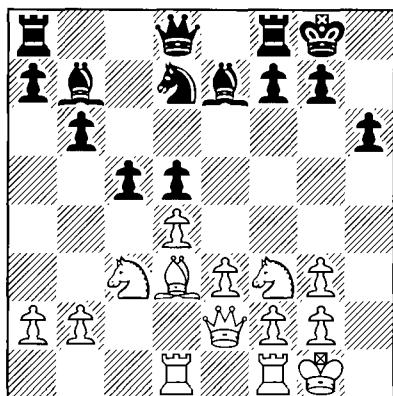


Diagram 45 (B)

White intends 15 Ba6

The position might look fairly equal, but White has two important advantages: firstly, a slightly more solid pawn structure; and secondly, *a safe and active post for*

his queen on e2.

In contrast, the black queen has no obvious refuge from the dangers of the d-file, and gets in the way of her rooks. Another consequence of the black queen's quandary is that Black's pawn centre is placed under even more strain, as it has to prevent the queen being exposed to attack.

10...c5 11 Bg3 Ne4 12 cxd5 exd5 13 Rad1 Nxc3?!

So Black acquires the bishop pair, which seems almost to be his birthright in the Tartakower. Nevertheless, Kramnik regards 13...Ndf6, supporting the knight on e4 as a better approach.

14 hxg3 (Diagram 45)

If you had to name White's best minor piece, you might well point to the active bishop on d3. In contrast, the prime candidate for the title of worst black piece would appear to be the bishop on b7. It sits on a blocked diagonal and has no function but to defend d5.

And yet Kramnik would be delighted to exchange his 'best' piece for Yusupov's 'worst' piece. If it were his move, in a flash he would play 15 Ba6!. Then after 15...Bxa6 16 Qxa6 the d5-pawn is already hanging and the pressure can be increased by d4xc5. If instead 15...Bc6 16 dxc5 uncovers an attack on d5, when after 16...Bxc5 17 Ne5 the d5-pawn is going to drop soon.

It transpires that the 'bad' bishop on b7 is carrying out an important positional function in guarding the d5-pawn.



NOTE: A piece should be judged on the service it provides to a player's position as a whole, not on its individual activity or lack of it.

14...a6?

Yusupov is a great player who knows which pieces he needs to keep to make his set-up function properly. Therefore he is quick to rule out the bishop intrusion on a6. However, afterwards Kramnik thought that 14...c4!? might have been the better way to achieve this, as in the game he gained strong attacking chances against the hanging pawns:

15 dxc5 bxc5 16 Bb1

A quiet move, but the potential pressure against h7 after Qc2 will be annoying.

16...Nb6

After 16...Nf6 17 e4! d4 18 e5 White has a strong initiative – Kramnik.

17 a4! (Diagram 46)

Planning to undermine the defender of d5 with a4-a5. In order not to spoil the mood of Tartakower devotees too much, I will quickly pass over the remaining moves:

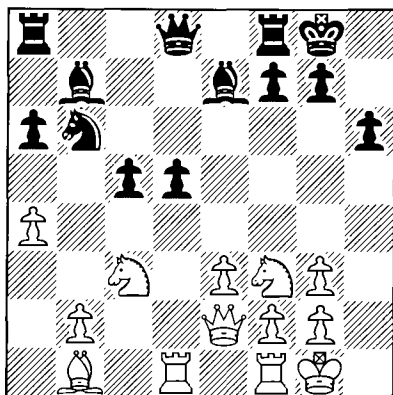


Diagram 46 (B)

Planning to undermine d5

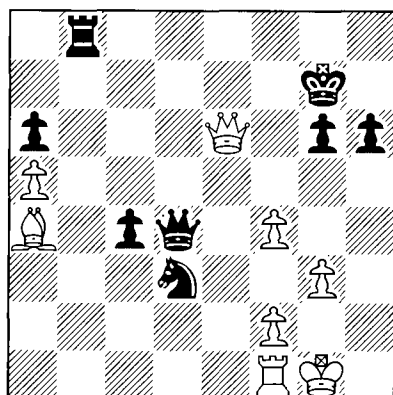


Diagram 47 (B)

Can Black defend?

17...Bf6 18 Qc2 g6 19 a5 Nc4 20 Nxd5!

The pawn front finally cracks, since if 20...Bxd5 21 e4 regains the piece.

20...Nxb2 21 Nxf6+ Qxf6 22 Rd2 Bxf3 23 gxf3 Rab8 24 f4 c4 25 e4 Rfd8 26 e5 Rxd2 27 Qxd2 Qd8 28 Qe2 Qd4!

Black is defending resolutely.

29 e6 Nd3 30 Bc2 fxe6 31 Qxe6+ Kg7 32 Ba4! (Diagram 47)

A crafty move in mutual time pressure.

32...c3?

The pawn needed to stay on c4 supporting the knight. After 32...Rf8! (Kramnik) Black might have held the draw. **33 Bc2!**

The bishop returns to c2 but, unfortunately for Black, pawns can't move backwards. Now the knight will be evicted from d3, when g6 will drop and the black king will be doomed.

33...Rb2 34 Qe7+ Kg8 35 Qe2 Nxf4 36 gxf4 Kf7 37 Rd1 1-0

White plays an early Bxf6

Tartakower and Lasker fans watch out!

In the final part of the chapter we look at what Black should do against an 'anti-Tartakower' approach by White involving an early Bxf6. The Lasker and Classical Defences can also be anticipated in the same manner.

Game 16

□ V.Malaniuk ■ A.Barsov

Tashkent 1987

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Qc2!?

After 6 Rc1, Tartakower fans will like 6...b6 7 e3 Bb7, whereas the Lasker clan will prefer 6...Ne4 7 Bxe7 Qxe7 8 e3 etc.

A major alternative, 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bxf6, is discussed in the next game.

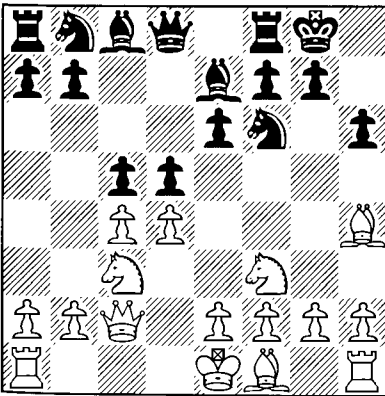
6...h6

The immediate 6...c5!? also makes it hard for White to prove any advantage.

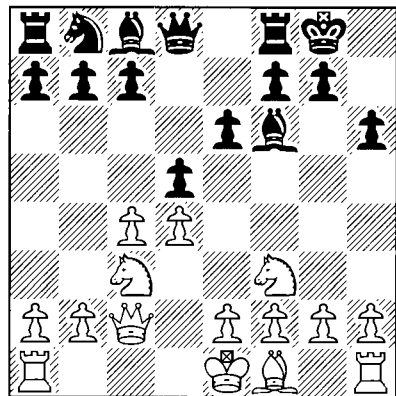
7 Bxf6

After 7 Bh4 Lasker fans might like to know that 7...Ne4!? is still possible, e.g. 8 Bxe7 Qxe7 9 e3 (since 9 Nxe4 dxe4 10 Qxe4 Qb4+ 11 Nd2 Qxb2 is nothing for White) 9...Nxc3 10 Qxc3 c6 11 Bd3 Nd7 12 0-0 dxc4 13 Bxc4 b6 14 Ne5 Nxe5 15 dxe5 Bb7 with a respectable position for Black in A.Nikitin-V.Burmakin, Alushta 2000; or if 8 Nxe4 Bxh4 9 Nc3 Be7 10 0-0-0 Na6 11 a3 c6 12 e3 Rb8 with unclear play in I.Khenkin-J.Timman, Tilburg 1994.

However, the 7...c5! recipe (**Diagram 48**) looks objectively stronger, when Black was equal after 8 dxc5 dxc4 9 e4 Nfd7!? 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Bxc4 Qxc5 in A.Lauber-R.Vaganian, Germany 1996; while 8 cxd5 cxd4 9 Nxd4 Nxd5 10 Bxe7 Nxe7 11 Rd1 Qb6 was also OK for Black in V.Golod-A.David, Vlissingen 2000.

**Diagram 48 (W)**

Position after 7 Bh4 c5!

**Diagram 49 (W)**

Black plans ...c7-c5



NOTE: It is important to see how with 8...dxc4! (Vaganian) and 8...cxd4! (David) Black can avoid being left with an IQP in these lines.

7...Bxf6 (Diagram 49) 8 0-0-0

A very aggressive stance, but it is Black who will get to do all the attacking! He also has dynamic play after 8 e4 dxe4 9 Qxe4 c5! or 8 Rd1 c5! 9 dxc5 (9 cxd5 cxd4 10 Nxd4 exd5 11 e3 Nc6 is no more promising for White) 9...Qa5! 10 cxd5 exd5 11 Qd2 (the d5-pawn is too hot to handle after, say, 11 Rxd5 Na6 intending ...Nb4 and ...Be6 etc.) 11...Bxc3 12 Qxc3 Qxc3+ 13 bxc3 Na6 14 e3 Nxc5 15 Rxd5 b6 and the bad state of White's queenside gave Black ample compensation for the pawn in P.San Segundo Carrillo-P.Van der Sterren, Linares 1995.

8...c5 9 dxc5 d4 10 e3 dxc3!! (Diagram 50)

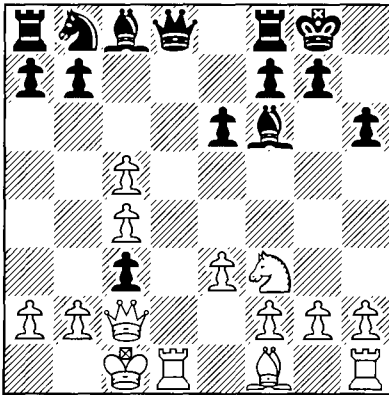


Diagram 50 (W)

A pretty queen sacrifice

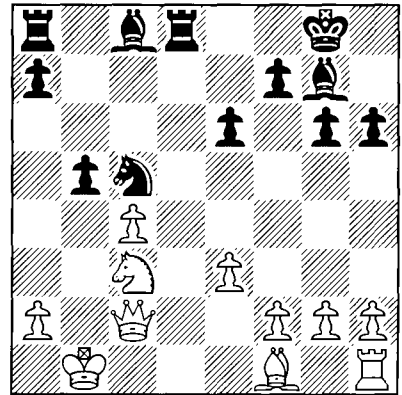


Diagram 51 (W)

Opening files for the rooks

Having come this far Black had little choice but to sacrifice his queen, but this is still a very pretty move.

11 Rxd8 cxb2+ 12 Kb1 Rxd8

Black's rook, strong dark-squared bishop, and attacking chances against the vulnerable white king give him full compensation for the queen. I wouldn't include the passed pawn on b2 as necessarily an asset, as Black is soon rejoicing when it vanishes!

13 Nd2 g6!

Stopping the bishop being forced off the b2-pawn by White's next move.

14 Ne4 Bg7 15 Nc3 Na6 16 Qxb2??

A horrible move that not only walks into a pin but also removes the black pawn that was actually providing shelter to the white king. Instead something like 16 g4 Nxc5 17 Bg2 was interesting, though Black is obviously having all the fun.

16...Nxc5 17 Qc2 b5! (Diagram 51)

The opening of the c-file will be fatal after 18 cxb5 Bb7 intending 19...Rac8 etc. If instead 18 Nxb5 it is disaster down the b-file: 18...Rb8! and then 19...a6.

18 Be2 bxc4 19 Bxc4 Rb8+ 20 Kc1 Ba6 0-1

After 21 Bxa6 Nxa6 White is absolutely defenceless against 22...Rdc8, to say nothing of 22...Nb4 or 22...Bxc3.

That was an incredible punishment of the Qc2, Bxf6 idea.

Game 17

□ T.Döppner ■ O.Korneev

German League 1992

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bxf6

By the way, if White changes his mind about his fourth move with 7 Bf4, then 7...c5! is a response similar to the chapter on 5 Bf4.

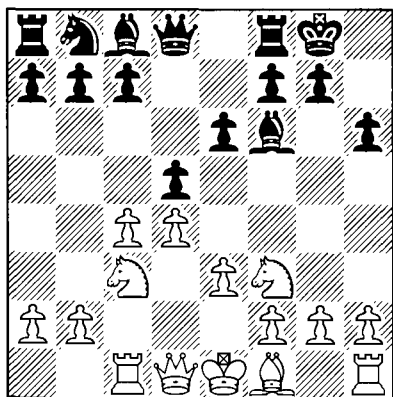
7...Bxf6 8 Rc1 (Diagram 52)

Diagram 52 (W)

White restrains ...c7-c5

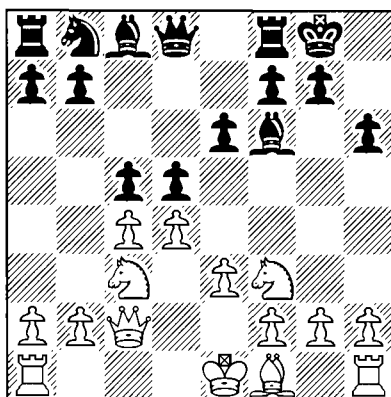


Diagram 53 (W)

Position after 8 Qc2 c5

Against other moves, Black can gain sufficient play with the ...c7-c5 move at the right moment – the natural freeing move is all the stronger with a dark-squared bishop sitting unchallenged on f6! For example, 8 cxd5 exd5 9 Bd3 c5! 10 dxc5 Bxc3+ 11 bxc3 Nd7 and Black is ready to regain the pawn by 12...Nxc5 with nothing to fear. Or similarly 8 Qd2 dxc4 (making sure he isn't left with an IQP on d5) 9 Bxc4 c5 10 dxc5 Nd7 and again Black recaptures the pawn and equalizes.

Instead 8 Qc2 deserves more respect. This move indicates that White might be planning to castle queenside and start a pawn storm against the black king. Nevertheless, it is a brave soul who puts his king in the path of the 'Dragon' bishop on f6. Black should reply 8...c5 (**Diagram 53**), when T.Vasilevich-T.Upton, Gibraltar 2004, continued 9 0-0-0 cxd4 10 exd4 Nc6 11 h4 dxc4 12 Qe4 Nb4 13 Bxc4 Bd7 14 Ne5 b5 and already I'm fearing the worst for the white king. Philosophically speaking, what has Black done so wrong that he deserves to be mated after 9 0-0-0 etc.? Whereas White has certainly tempted fate by putting his king on the exposed c1-square.

Not surprisingly, White has on the whole avoided queenside castling. In S.Halkias-S.Atalik, Kavala 2005, he preferred 9 dxc5 but was gradually outplayed: 9...dxc4 10 Bxc4 Nd7 11 Ne4 Nxc5! 12 Nxf6+ (if 12 Nxc5 Qa5+ regains the piece with advantage) 12...Qxf6 13 0-0 Bd7 14 Rfd1 Rfc8 15 Qe2 a6 16 Rd4 b5 17 Bb3 e5 18 Rd2 Bg4 and Black had the initiative.

8...c6

The natural move that wards off any danger on the c-file.

9 Bd3 Nd7 10 0-0

Instead 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4 a6 would take us into Exchange Variation territory.

10...dxc4

Whereas now Black concedes the centre in the style of the Lasker and Classical Defences.

11 Bxc4 e5

The standard freeing move, though 11...c5!? was quite interesting as well.

12 h3 exd4 13 exd4 Nb6 14 Bb3 (Diagram 54)

I am rather doubtful about Black's chances with this IQP centre in the Classical Defence chapter. In this version, however, he has the bishop on f6 to fight against the Ne5 move by White.

14...a5!?

Korneev uses the latent threat of ...a5-a4 to cajole White into weakening his queenside slightly.

15 a3

Or 15 Re1 Bf5 16 Ne5 Bxe5, when Black was happy to give back the bishop pair to get rid of the dominant white knight in R.Livshits-A.Barsov, Guelph 2004.

15...Bf5 16 Re1 Qd6 17 Ne4 Bxe4 18 Rxe4 Rfe8 19 Qe2 Rxe4

The Grandmaster goes about his business, exchanging off some pieces to make sure White's initiative never amounts to anything, while keeping some other pieces to assail the IQP.

20 Qxe4 Rd8 21 Rd1 a4

Methodical: the b2-pawn is fixed as a target for a future ...Nc4.

22 Bc2 g6 23 Ne5 Bg7 24 Qf4 Qf6 25 Qg3 Qg5! (Diagram 55)

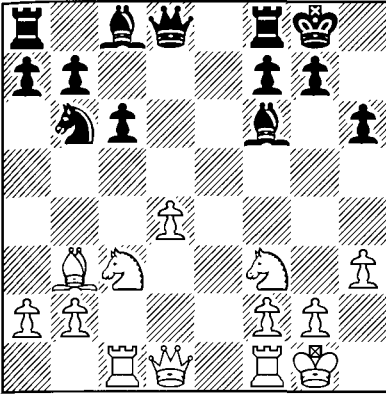


Diagram 54 (B)

Black is OK

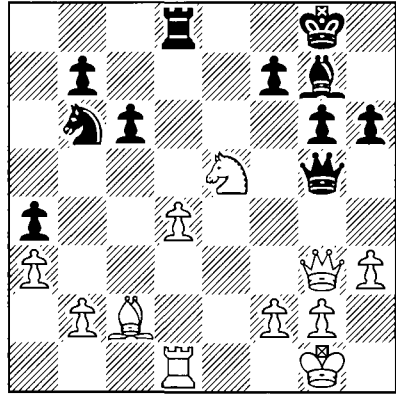


Diagram 55 (W)

White's position is crumbling

Also very instructive. After 26 Qxg5 hxg5 27 Nf3 (or else 27...Bxe5) 27...Nc4 it's all falling apart for White, as 28 Bxa4? loses a piece to 28...Nxb2

26 Qf3 Bxe5 27 dxe5 Re8

The effect of Black's impressive play would rather be spoiled by 27...Rxd1+?! 28 Qxd1 Qxe5?? 29 Qd8+ Kg7 30 Qxb6. After the game move, the white pawns start to crumble.

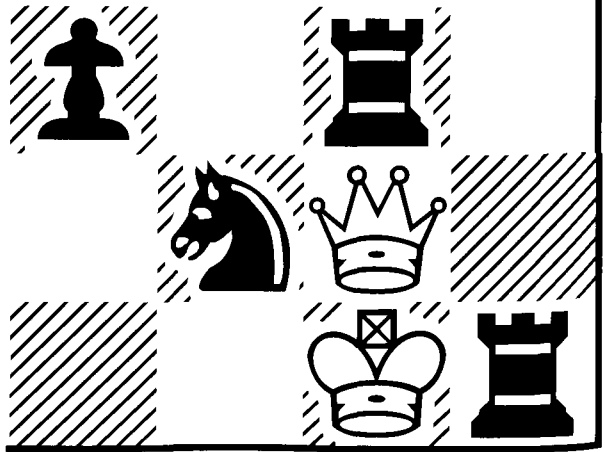
Here are the remaining moves:

28 b3 Rxe5 29 bxa4 Nd5 30 Qd3 Nf4 31 Qd8+ Kg7 32 Qxg5 Rxg5 33 Rd7 Rxg2+ 34 Kf1 Rh2 35 Kg1 Rxh3 36 Rxb7 Rxa3 37 Rb6 Ne2+ 38 Kf1 Nd4 39 Be4 Rxa4 40 Bxc6 Nxc6 41 Rxc6 Rg4 42 f3 Rg5 43 Kf2 h5 44 f4 Rf5 45 Kg3 h4+ 46 Kg4 h3 0-1

Chapter Three

Lasker's Defence

- Introduction
- Various plans for White and Black
- White plays the dangerous 9 Rc1
- Black develops with ...b7-b6
- The alternative advance ...e6-e5



Introduction

The modern starting position of the Lasker Defence is reached after the moves **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bh4 Ne4 (Diagram 1)**

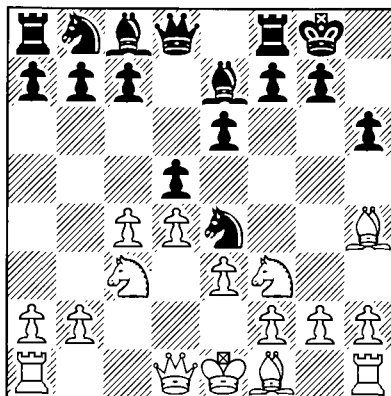


Diagram 1 (W)

Lasker's Defence

Having developed his kingside as rapidly as possible, Black pushes the white bishop back to h4 and then launches the knight into the e4-square.

So why would Black take immediate action in the centre, rather than mobilize his queenside as in the Tartakower? I'll let a World Champion answer that question:

'The object is to exchange a couple of pieces and at the same time to bring about a position full of possibilities and with promising chances of success once the endgame stage is reached. On general principles it should be wrong, because the same knight is moved three times in the opening, although it involves the exchange of two pieces. In reality the difficulty of this variation, as well as in nearly all the variations of the Queen's Gambit, lies in the slow development of Black's queen's bishop.'

- Capablanca, *Chess Fundamentals* 1921.

The name of the opening

Emanuel Lasker, the World Champion from 1894 to 1921, played an early form of this defence three times against US Champion Frank Marshall in their 1907 World Championship match. It was then enthusiastically copied seven times by the young Capablanca in his own match with Marshall two years later. In the ten games playing White against the Lasker, Marshall managed a dismal +1=4-5. On the other hand, since overall he lost to Lasker 8-0 with seven draws, and 8-1 to

Capablanca with 14 draws, perhaps we shouldn't rush to draw any conclusions!

The opening moves in all these games were 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 Ne4; whereas the modern sequence of the Lasker is 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 Nf3 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 Ne4, as given above.

It is curious that the original Lasker sequence has been played less than 60 times in almost 100 years of international chess, but in 10 of these games the black pieces were commanded by players who held the World Championship for 33 years!

Capablanca, like Lasker, must have realized that Marshall was far more dangerous in the middlegame than in the endgame; therefore he was eager to simplify against the US Champion and test his technique. If White had hoped to build up an attack on the black king in the middlegame, then the double exchange of pieces was going to be unwelcome to him.

Queen's Bishop friendly?

Yes. Black may be making a lot of moves on the kingside, but the exchanges induced with ...Ne4 simplify the game and make it possible for ...b7-b6 and ...Bb7 to follow quickly. Then the bishop is more or less guaranteed an open diagonal, as ...d5xc4 is an integral part of Black's plan.

Lasker fans watch out! White plays an early Bxf6

You should visit the last section of the Tartakower chapter at some point in your study of the Lasker, as you will need to know what to do if White prevents it with 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Qc2!? or 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bxf6.

Various plans for White and Black

Game 18

□ **B.Jobava** ■ **D.Shengelia**

European Championship, Batumi 2002

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bh4 Ne4 8 Bxe7

Theory has established that White doesn't profit through capturing the knight on e4, though of course that won't necessarily stop one of your surprised opponents playing it! If White plays 8 Nxe4?! then 8...Bxh4 9 Nc3 is interesting: Black has the two bishops but hasn't achieved all the exchanges he was aiming for. So 8...exd4 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 seems the best way to play, transposing to 8 Bxe7 Qxe7 9 Nxe4?! dxe4. Then 10 Nd2 f5 is very comfortable for Black: next move he can play 11...e5 in-

creasing his grip on the centre even further.

White could avoid the exchange of bishops with 8 Bg3, but he will regret it after 8...Bb4! (**Diagram 2**)

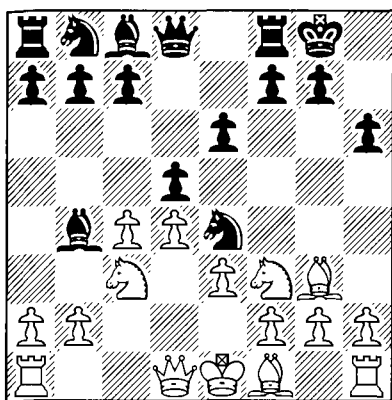


Diagram 2 (W)

Position after 8 Bg3 Bb4!

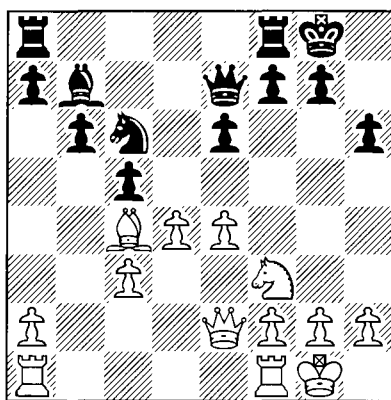


Diagram 3 (W)

An ideal Lasker for Black

The black bishop sees all the action. For example 9 Qc2 c5 10 Bd3 Nxc3 11 hxg3 dxc4 12 Bxc4 cxd4 13 exd4 Nc6 and Black had an active game in M.Cebalo-A.Yusupov, Corsica 2004.

You will have noticed how Yusupov replied to White's imprecise 8 Bg3 in a concrete fashion by moving his bishop a second time to b4 and then freeing his game with ...c7-c5. After all, the only reason Black played ...Be7 was to break the pin on the knight on f6, so if the white bishop goes away, so can the black bishop!

Nor did Yusupov rush to exchange off the knight. He didn't play ...Nxc3 until he had established his counterplay in the centre, as after 8...Nxc3 9 hxg3 White might have been able to exploit the open h-file to start an attack with Qc2 and 0-0-0 etc. Besides, Black wanted to put extra pressure on c3.

The Russian Grandmaster also resisted 8...Nxc3. It would have been easy to make this exchange based on the lazy reasoning that it is the move that Black *always* makes in the Lasker; but in that case after 9 bxc3, White could have built up an attacking scheme on the c-file after a future c4xd5 and c3-c4, when the white bishop would be performing a useful role on g3 in putting pressure on c7.



TIP: If your opponent plays a move you have never seen before, don't just bash out all the moves you have seen given in books in a similar situation. A whole new treatment of the position might be necessary, and that could require some creative thinking.

8...Qxe7 9 cxd5

A key moment for White. We shall look at 9 Rc1 later, while 9 Nxe4 was discussed in the note to 8 Bxe7 above.

The routine 9 Bd3 is hardly going to trouble Black, e.g. 9...Nxc3 10 bxc3 dxc4 11 Bxc4 c5 12 0-0 b6 13 Qe2 Bb7 14 e4 Nc6 (**Diagram 3**)

Here Black has everything he could wish for when he plays the Lasker Defence:

- 1) A bishop nicely posted on b7.
- 2) The freeing ...c7-c5 advance.
- 3) A queenside devoid of weakness and under no pressure.

It might seem strange that after doing his best to fortify the d5-pawn in the early stages of the opening, Black is often quite content to see the pawn vanish. Why this betrayal?

White has more space in the diagram above after the demise of d5; but that is a price Black is often willing to pay to achieve a good deployment of his pieces. Besides, he has managed to establish one pawn in the centre with ...c7-c5. As we shall see, both here and in similar Queen's Gambit defences, Black's strategy often revolves around the disappearance of his d5-pawn followed by a counterattack against d4 with ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5.

9 Qc2 is more tricky, but 9...c6!? is an interesting reply, just ignoring the threat to e4. Then after 10 Nxe4 dxe4 11 Qxe4 Qb4+ (the point) 12 Nd2 Qxb2 Black regains his pawn and looks equal (whereas White would have to resign if he tries to be clever: 13 Bd3? f5! and Black wins a rook). Instead of taking on e4, White can play 10 Bd3, but then Black can head for the type of set-up discussed directly above: 10...Nxc3 11 Qxc3 dxc4 12 Bxc4 Nd7 13 0-0 b6 14 e4 Bb7 15 Rfe1 c5 etc.

9...Nxc3

A necessary exchange as otherwise d5 is lost.

10 bxc3 exd5

An interesting alternative was 10...Qa3?!, hitting c3 and keeping the white queen out of b3. The endgame after 11 Qc1 Qxc1+ 12 Rxc1 exd5 13 c4 dxc4 14 Bxc4 looks rather unpleasant for Black, but still, if you are happy to defend for a while after 14...c6, go ahead!

11 Qb3 Rd8 12 c4 (Diagram 4)

12...Be6!?

An intriguing sacrifice.

There is nothing wrong with solid play either: 12...dxc4 13 Bxc4 Nc6! (with the positional threat of 14...Nc4, exchanging off the strong white bishop) 14 Qc3 (a

safer approach for White is 14 Be2 b6 15 0-0 Bb7 16 Rac1 Na5! – clearing the way for the standard freeing move – 17 Qb2 Rac8 18 h3 c5 etc. with equal chances) 14...Bg4 15 0-0 (White is pushing his luck in letting Black weaken his kingside) 15...Bxf3 16 gxf3 Qf6 17 Be2 Rac8!, defending c7 and so freeing the black knight for action. This was A.Karpov-A.Yusupov, London 1989, in which Black managed to build up threats against the white king with ...Qh4 and ...Rd5. Karpov survived by sacrificing a pawn, but will your opponents be so lucky?

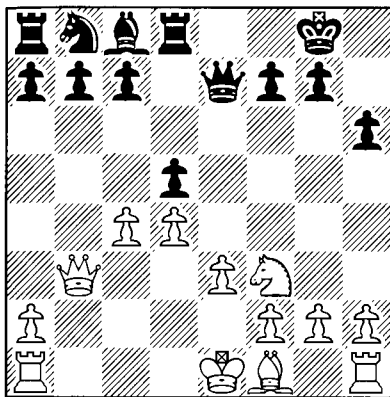


Diagram 4 (B)

White challenges d5 again

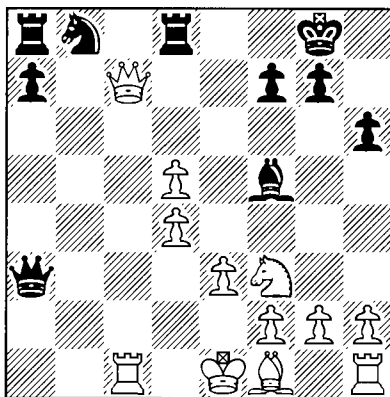


Diagram 5 (B)

Has Black's attack faltered?

13 Qxb7

White takes the bait. Probably discretion was better than valour here: 13 c5! would avoid all the complications.

13...Qa3!

14 Qxa8? Qc3+ 15 Ke2 Qxa1 would be hopeless for White, whose king is his only centralized piece.

14 Rb1

If 14 Nd2 dxc4!, when 15 Qxa8? Bd5 wins the white queen, while otherwise 15 Bxc4 15...Bxc4 16 Qxc7 Nc6! 17 Qxc6 Rac8 gives Black a huge attack, as the white king can't escape the centre.

14...Qxa2 15 cxd5 Bf5 16 Rc1 Qa3 17 Qxc7 (Diagram 5)

If 17 Rxc7 Qa1+ 18 Ke2 Nd7, perhaps followed by 19...Rdb8 or 19...Rab8!?, gives Black massive play for his pawns.

Now, though, it looks as if Black's attack has faltered. The rook on d8 is hanging with check, Black still hasn't developed the knight on b8 or rook on a8, and given

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

just one quiet moment White will play Be2 and 0-0 and it is all over.

No doubt White expected 17...Rc8 when 18 Qxc8+ Bxc8 19 Rxc8+ Kh7 20 Be2 is excellent for him: he can castle and then advance the passed d-pawn. Without the help of the entombed rook or knight, the black queen couldn't hope to hold things together.

But Black has a brilliant move that cuts across all these considerations.

17...Nc6!! 18 Rd1?

After 18 Qxc6 Rac8 the white queen cannot run away as c1 drops with carnage. The only way White could save himself was by 18 Rxc6 Rac8 19 Qe5 Rxc6 20 dxc6 Qc1+ 21 Ke2 Qc4+ with perpetual check.

18...Rac8 19 Qf4 Bc2! (Diagram 6)

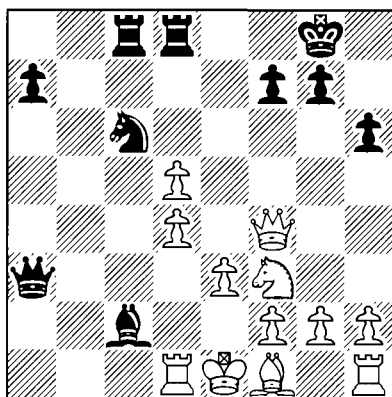


Diagram 6 (W)

The attack is overwhelming

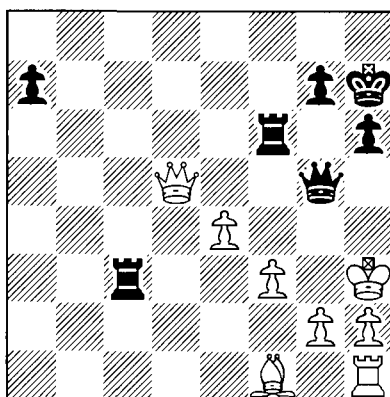


Diagram 7 (B)

It's mate in three

The black attack will quickly become overwhelming, as White never has time to develop his kingside pieces.

20 dxc6 Bxd1 21 Kxd1 Rxc6 22 Nd2 Qc1+ 23 Ke2 Rc2

There goes the knight.

24 Kf3 Qxd2 25 Kg3 Rc3 26 Kg4 Qd1+ 27 f3 Qd2 28 e4 Rxd4 29 Qe5

Obviously there is zero hope in exchanging queens, even if by a miracle White extricated the bishop from f1 without g2 dropping.

29...Rd6 30 Qe8+ Kh7 31 Qxf7 Qg5+ 32 Kh3 Rf6 33 Qd5 (Diagram 7) 33...Rxf3+!

A nice finishing touch. It is mate in one if White takes the rook; mate in two if he doesn't.

34 g3 Rxf3+ 0-1

White plays the dangerous 9 Rc1

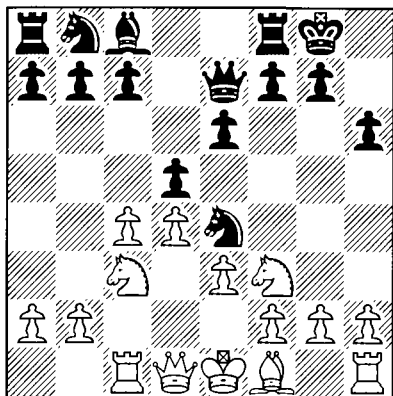


Diagram 8 (B)

White plays 9 Rc1

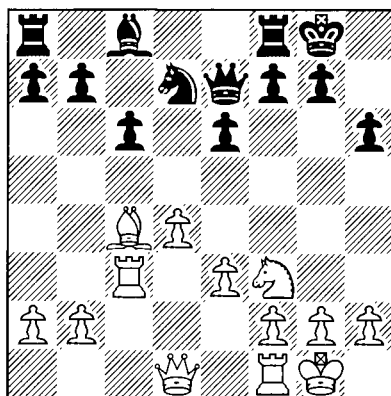


Diagram 9 (B)

Black must activate the bishop

We should now turn our attention to 9 Rc1 (**Diagram 8**), which is by far White's most popular move at the time of writing. Black usually replies 9...c6. This might look a bit odd, but Black is in no hurry to take on c3, and delaying the move restricts White's options somewhat – he more or less has to force matters with 10 Bd3. Not that we are talking of any real hardship for White here as d3 is a good square for the bishop, and after 9...Nxc3 10 Rxc3 c6 he is likely to play 11 Bd3 anyway. But why give him a choice?

The only case in which 9...c6 would be a wasted move is if Black could get away with ...Nxc3 and ...c7-c5, but that is simply too dangerous in view of White's pressure down the c-file.

So, play goes:

9...c6 10 Bd3

Now in his classic work, *Basic Chess Openings*, Reuben Fine strongly recommends retreating the knight with 10...Nf6, which has the good point that the c-file remains blocked. The negative side to the move is that Black wastes time and the black camp remains clogged with three minor pieces, whereas Lasker's idea was to reduce the number to two minor pieces. The modern preference is strongly for the capture on c3.

10...Nxc3 11 Rxc3

The only sensible move with the rook committed to c1.

11...dxc4

Once again, the key to Black's game plan is to concede the d5 strong point. 11...Nd7 12 0-0 dxc4 would come to the same thing.

12 Bxc4 Nd7

Black develops his knight to the only available centre square. It is well placed to support an eventual breakout with ...c6-c5 or ...e6-e5.

13 0-0 (Diagram 9)

Black has to make a crucial choice

We have reached a critical position.

If you remove the bishops from c4 and c8, the position is equal. As things stand, however, the black bishop is shut in, which is a problem not only for the piece itself, but also for the rook on a8, which is denied the chance to coordinate its activity with the other black pieces.

No position can survive indefinitely without the help of a rook and bishop. Therefore it is imperative that Black devise a plan to rescue the bishop from its imprisonment. If the cost is a slight weakening of the pawn structure, or a less safe king, then so be it.

There are three possible methods at hand: an immediate 13...c5?; a carefully prepared ...c6-c5 (after ...b7-b6 and ...Bb7, etc.); or 13...e5. We shall look at examples of all three plans.

The dangers of a premature freeing move

Game 19

□ V.Chekhov ■ G.Schmidt

Dresden 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Rc1 h6 7 Bh4 c6 8 Nf3 Ne4 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 Bd3 Nxc3 11 Rxc3 dxc4 12 Bxc4 Nd7 13 0-0

Note the rather strange move order, with White delaying Nf3 until move eight. But as so often in the Queen's Gambit Declined, all roads lead to Rome, if through some rather convoluted alleyways.

13...c5?

Despite Black's eagerness to free his bishop, he needs to tread carefully in order to make sure that the activity of the white pieces stays within manageable proportions. He is playing with fire in opening the c-file when so far behind in development.



NOTE: The black bishop on c8 needs an outlet in the Queen's Gambit Declined, but this mustn't be an 'inlet' for the white pieces!

14 Qe2! (Diagram 10)

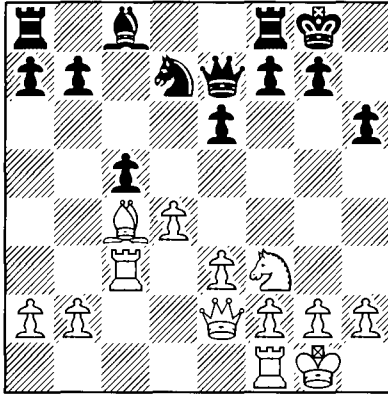


Diagram 10 (B)

Position after 14 Qe2!

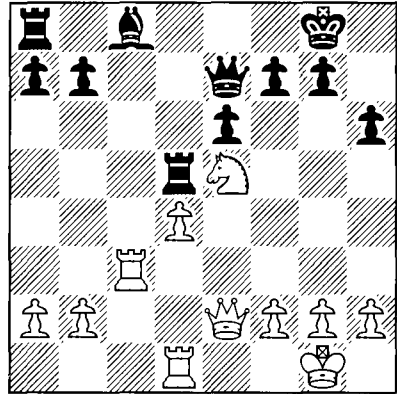


Diagram 11 (B)

The white knight dominates

A quiet move of great strength. White clears the way for his king's rook to join in the battle, while, as will be seen, the pin on the e6-pawn that results after the exchange on d4 will add to Black's problems.

14...cxd4 15 exd4

The correct recapture, despite the fact that White has an isolated pawn. Now Black has to reckon with d4-d5 at some point, when e6 would be attacked three times.

15...Nf6 16 Bb3!

Another nicely understated move. The bishop clears the c-file for the rook, which is ready to bound into c7 as soon as Black plays ...Bd7. White doesn't rush into 16 d5, as 16...Re8 17 Re1 Qd8! gives Black good chances of slipping out of the pressure.

16...Rd8 17 Rd1 Nd5 18 Bxd5!

The black knight was holding the defence together, whereas the white bishop was rather useless. Hence the power of this exchange.

18...Rxd5 19 Ne5 (Diagram 11)

The white knight is dominant since Black's bishop is performing no role at all.

19...Qd8

Schmidt defends the c7-square but leaves f7 in the lurch. Still, the alternatives

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

weren't appetizing:

a) 19...Bd7 drops the second rank to 20 Rc7.

b) 19...b6 allows 20 Rdc1 Bd7 21 Rc7 tying Black up, as if 21...Rxd4? 22 Nc6.

c) 19...f6 weakens the kingside and in particular the e6-pawn. Nevertheless, this was probably the lesser evil.

Returning to the game, if Black were left alone for one move, he could play 20...Bd7! followed by 21...Be8. Then the bishop would still be passive, but the rook on a8 would see daylight and the f7-square would be bolstered. Therefore White has to strike fast.

20 Qh5! Qe8

There is a full scale invasion after 20...f6 21 Qf7+ Kh8 22 Rc7, threatening mate on g7.

21 Rg3!

The rook shows its versatility by striking not forwards but sideways against the black king. There is now no good answer to the threat of 22 Qxh6.

21...Kf8 22 Qg4 g6 23 Rf3 1-0 (Diagram 12)

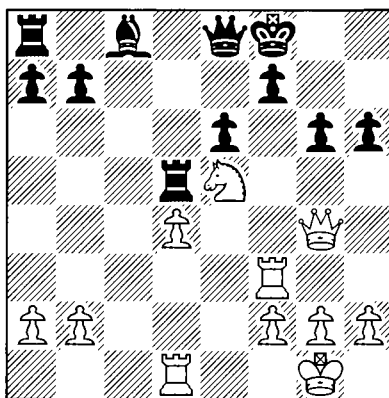


Diagram 12 (B)

f7 is undefendable

The f7-square is undefendable, unless Black plays 23...f5 when 24 Qh4! (not satisfied with a measly pawn after 24 Qxg6?) 24...Kg7 (the only way to defend h6 and prevent a queen invasion on f6) 25 Rh3! and if 25...h5 26 Rg3 leads to catastrophe on g6, while 25...Qh8 26 Qe7+ Kg8 27 Qf7 is mate.

Here Black was destroyed before he got to use his queen's rook or bishop; in the previous game, White was mated with his king's bishop on f1 and king's rook on h1. Who says the Queen's Gambit Declined is a slow opening?

Black develops with ...b7-b6

Returning to the position after 13 0-0, we now consider Black's second option:

13...b6 (Diagram 13)

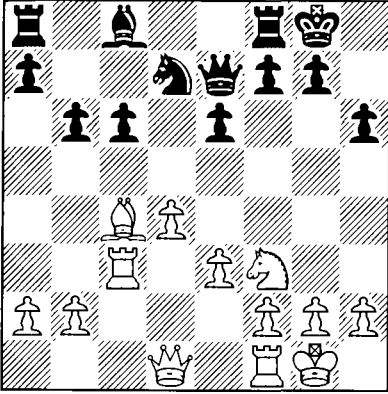


Diagram 13 (W)

Black plays 13...b6

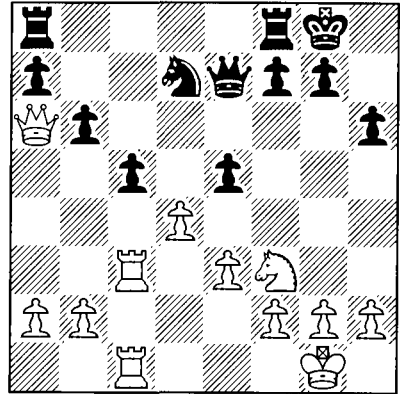


Diagram 14 (W)

Black alleviates the pressure

That's more like it! Black prepares 14...Bb7 and only then 15...c5. In that case, not only is his bishop taking part in the game, but also the c8-square has been vacated, which allows ...Rfc8 to challenge for control of the c-file.

Nevertheless, for the moment White still has his lead in development, and both the a6-square and the c6-pawn have been weakened by 13...b6. Therefore he can try:

14 Qe2

The alternative 14 Bd3 is analysed below.

14...Bb7 15 Ba6!

I've always regarded it as something of a paradox that White spends a great deal of energy in the Queen's Gambit trying to prove that Black's light-squared bishop is a dud piece, but as soon as it emerges on b7 White is often keen to get rid of it as soon as possible! Here, of course, he wants to probe Black's loosened queenside structure with his queen.

15...Bxa6 16 Qxa6 c5 17 Rfc1

Both sides have achieved their aims. Black no longer has the problem of developing his light-squared bishop and has no serious structural weaknesses. On the other hand, the white queen sitting on a6 is a nuisance and the c5-pawn is under

pressure. If, for example, 17...Rfc8 18 b4! leaves Black in a highly unpleasant pin that is probably going to cost a pawn.

Here Black can alleviate the pressure with:

17...e5! (Diagram 14)

A positional idea well worth remembering. If then 18 dxe5? all pressure is off the c5-pawn; while after 18 dxc5 Nxc5 19 Qb5 e4 20 Nd4 Rfe8 Black was solid enough to hold on without any real problems in Greenfeld-Korchnoi, Beersheva 1995.

Note that if 21 b4 Nd3.

Going back to the position after 13...b6, another way White can try for pressure is with the insidious 14 Bd3!?, attacking the c6-pawn straightaway. However, Black managed to find an impressive antidote in the following game.

Game 20

□ **V.Zvjaginsev** ■ **V.Bologan**

Poikovsky 2003

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 Ne4 8 Bxe7 Qxe7 9 Rc1 c6 10 Bd3 Nxc3 11 Rxc3 dxc4 12 Bxc4 Nd7 13 0-0 b6 14 Bd3 c5!

Whether he likes it or not, Black has to play this advance as 14...Bb7? 15 Be4 followed by 16 Qc2 is full of doom with c6 undefendable.

15 Be4 Rb8 16 Qa4 Nf6! (Diagram 15)

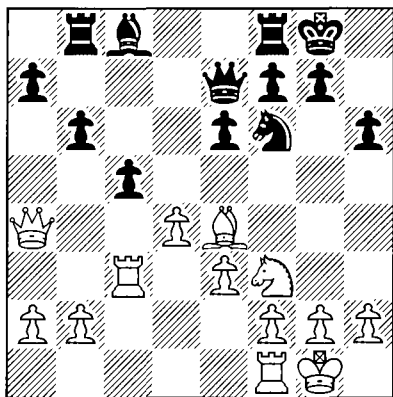


Diagram 15 (W)

A good moment for ...Nf6

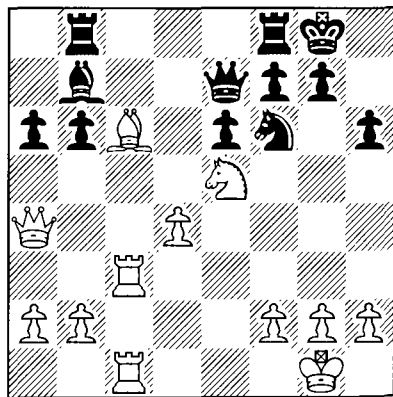


Diagram 16 (B)

What now for Black?

An improvement over the routine 16...Bb7 when 17 Bxb7 Rxb7 18 Qc2! kept Black under long-term lock and key in A.Karpov-A.Yusupov, Dortmund 1997.

Nine times out of ten, 16...Nf6 would be a lousy move for Black, in view of 17 dxc5 bxc5 when the isolated pawn on c5 would be a fatal weakness. But in this specific instance the dynamics of the position outweigh the importance of the static features. White would be unable to consolidate the way he wants – by Qc2 and Bd3, say, with a strategically winning position – as it is impossible to deal with the threat of 18...Rxb2 and safeguard the bishop at the same time: 18 Qc2? Nxe4 19 Qxe4 Rxb2 drops a pawn, while 18 b3?? is even worse because 18...Rb4 wins the bishop!

17 Bc6!

The best reply, although Black can be pleased that he can no longer be forked by Ne5 and Nc6 for the moment.

If instead 17 Bd3, then 17...Nd5 looks fine for Black, but 17...Bb7! looks best of all: the damage to the white kingside is more significant than the isolated c5-pawn after 18 dxc5 Bxf3 19 gxf3 bxc5, while 18 Qxa7? Nd5! leaves White facing both 19...Nxc3 and 19...Ra8 winning his queen!

17...cxd4 18 exd4

Black can become active after 18 Nxd4 e5!.

18...a6

Black prepares his next move by ruling out Qxa7. Compared to 18...a5, no hole is left on the b5-square.

19 Ne5 Bb7 20 Rfc1 (Diagram 16)

After 20 Bxb7 Qxb7 the a6-pawn is defended. Now, however, all the white pieces seem superbly coordinated. Until, that is, Black overturns the cart with a dynamic pawn sacrifice:

20...Nd5!

Much more effective than 17...Nd5 in the Chekhov game as the black bishop is able to show its teeth.

21 Bxd5 Bxd5! 22 Qxa6 Ra8 23 Qxb6 Qg5 24 g3

Of course White must stop the mate, but the black bishop now has a completely open diagonal – quite a contrast with some of the pitiful clerics you see locked up behind the c6-pawn.

24...Rxa2 (Diagram 17)

Black regains a pawn and has massive compensation for the one still missing. The game now comes to a sharp and curious finish.

25 Nd7 Qd2! 26 Nxf8 Rxb2 27 Qxb2 Qxb2 28 Rc8 Bb7!

The white rook can't remain defending both c1 and f8, but...

29 Nxe6+! Bxc8 30 Rxc8+ Kh7 31 Nf8+ ½z-½z

It's a draw by perpetual check after 31...Kg8 32 Ne6+ etc.

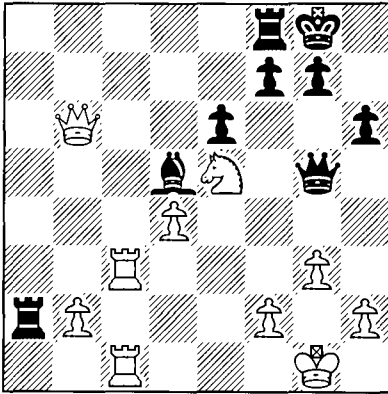


Diagram 17 (W)

The bishop rules the long diagonal

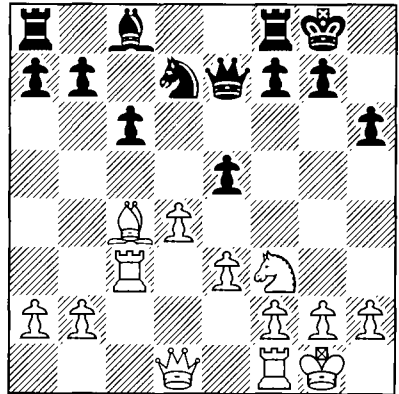


Diagram 18 (W)

Black plays the freeing 13...e5

The alternative freeing advance ...e6-e5

The final option for Black at move thirteen is:

13...e5 (Diagram 18)

This position could arise from the Classical Defence as follows (albeit with the black pawn on h7 not h6): 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5. In the Classical chapter, after 13 Bb3 I recommend 13...e4 as the best plan for Black. I think the same treatment also works well here in the Lasker – in fact, it could be superior, as there is no pawn on h7 that White can target, besides the black king having an air pocket.

Please consult the detailed analysis in Chapter Four, whilst bearing in mind how having the pawn on h6 rather than h7 might affect the play. Here is just one example via the Lasker (the pawn is on h6, of course):

14 Bb3 e4 15 Nd2 Nf6 16 Qc2 Bg4 17 Re1 Nd5!? (Diagram 19)

This works splendidly, though Black also has less violent measures available, as you can see in the Classical chapter.

18 Bxd5 cxd5 19 Rc1?

Encouraging Black to launch a kingside attack. Instead he might try 19 Rc7 Rfc8! 20 Rc1 Rxc7 21 Qxc7 Qxc7 22 Rxc7 Rc8! 23 Rxc8+ (taking on b7 loses the knight) 23...Bxc8 when it has burnt out into a drawn endgame.

19...Qg5! 20 Kf1 Rad8 21 Rc7 Rd6! 22 h3 Bf5 23 Qc5 Rg6 24 g4 Be6 25 Kg2 h5! (Diagram 20)

Well, I guess it doesn't really matter whether the pawn came from h7 or h6: the g4-point is going to collapse. Black's attack finally won on move 40 in A.Anastasian-I.Miladinovic, Moscow 1994.

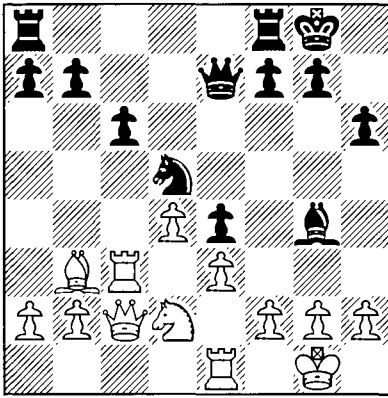


Diagram 19 (W)

Black scorps the c-file

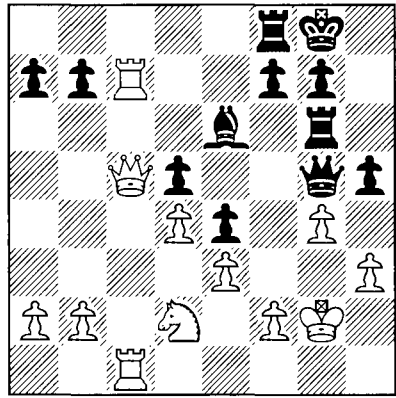


Diagram 20 (W)

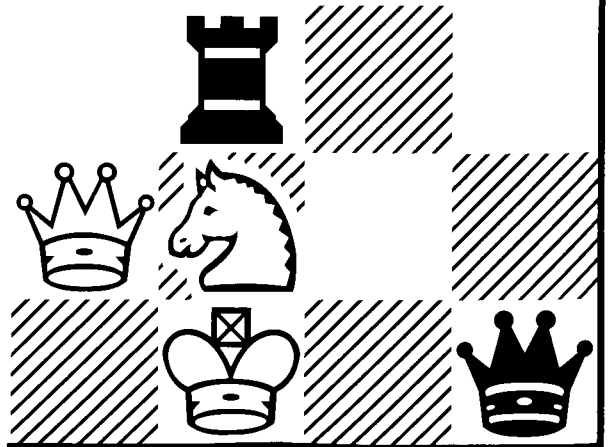
The g4-point collapses

Before I say goodbye, I should remind you to check out the final section of the Tartakower chapter, just in case your opponent is mean enough to kill your horse with 7 Bxf6 before it gets to e4.

Chapter Four

The Classical Defence

- Introduction
- White makes life easy for Black
- White plays 7 Qc2
- White plays 7 Rc1
- White holds the centre: 13 Bb3



Introduction

The starting position of the Classical Defence, which is sometimes called the Orthodox Defence, is reached after the moves **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 (Diagram 1)**

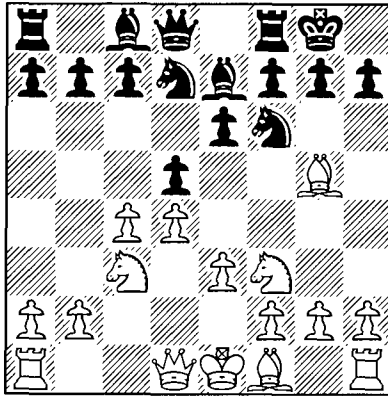


Diagram 1 (W)

The Classical Defence

As usual Black spends the first five moves mobilizing his kingside pieces and setting up a solid base in the centre. But then, rather than trying for a quick release of the tension with 6...h6 7 Bh4 Ne4 (Lasker), or making a way out of for his queen's bishop with 6...h6 7 Bh4 b6 (Tartakower), Black simply develops his queen's knight to d7.

Black will typically seek freedom for his pieces with ...c7-c6, ...d5xc4 and ...Nd5!, or else try for counterplay with ...c7-c5.

The name of the opening

Getting the knights out quickly is regarded as a classical way of handling an opening, so the name is appropriate. It is also known as the Orthodox Defence. Around the beginning of the 20th century, Tarrasch started playing his 'normal defence' to the Queen's Gambit: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5. In contrast, the subject of the present book, 3...Nf6, was 'the orthodox defence'. As most players at the time played a quick ...Nbd7 in the opening, it is easy to see how in many people's minds the name 'Orthodox' came to mean specifically the Classical Defence 6...Nbd7, rather than the whole of the 3...Nf6 Queen's Gambit.

Queen's Bishop friendly?

Not particularly. As players since antiquity have complained about problems activating the queen's bishop in the Queen's Gambit, we wouldn't expect something called the Classical Defence to have all the answers! In playing 6...Nbd7, Black not only uses a tempo but also removes the knight's support of the c6- and a6-squares. Thereafter White's extra move and the increased fragility of the black queenside make ...b7-b6 and ...Bb7 a less attractive option than in, say, the Tartakower. More likely Black will play ...c7-c6, etc., forgetting about the bishop for the time being. It may eventually emerge on b7 after some necessary preparation, or get out via the centre.

No ...h7-h6 in this variation

It should be mentioned that, in general, Black tries to do without the pawn move ...h7-h6 in the Classical Defence. This is because he has a 'back-up' knight on d7 available for the defence of h7, should it ever be threatened (see the discussion of this subject at the end of Chapter One). Besides, Black often plays a quick ...c7-c6 or ...c7-c5 in the Classical, when there is no longer the risk of the white queen attacking the pawn on c7 while supporting Bd3xh7 at the same time – a trap that was also examined in Chapter One.

White makes life easy for Black: 7 Bd3

With 6...Nbd7 Black completes his development as rapidly as possible. He has two problems: how to negate White's space advantage in the centre and what to do about the bishop on c8.

7 Bd3?! (Diagram 2)

A routine move of the kind that often occurs at club level. Then Black can set about resolving the drawbacks to his position with:

7...dxc4! 8 Bxc4 c5 9 0-0 a6

Planning to push White back with 10...b5 11 Bd3 Bb7 with an excellent set-up for Black.

10 a4!

A wise precaution.

10...cxd4 11 exd4

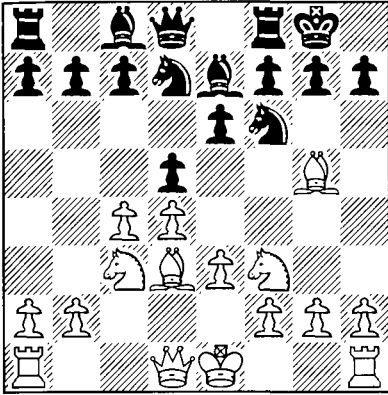
This IQP position doesn't promise White much.

11...Nb6

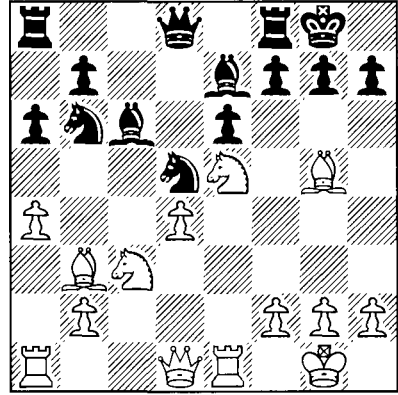
Black gains maximum benefit from the bishop on c4.

12 Bb3 Bd7 13 Ne5 Bc6 14 Re1

After 14 Nxc6 bxc6, the black pawn on c6 is no weaker than the d4-pawn and provides an excellent base for a black knight on d5.

14...Nfd5 (Diagram 3)**Diagram 2 (B)**

White plays routinely

**Diagram 3 (W)**

Black is very solid

And Black has a very solid set-up.

Rather than 7 Bd3, White has three main responses to the Classical Defence that deserve respect: the first is 7 Qc2, which may or may not involve queenside castling; the second 7 Rc1 with pressure along the c-file. The third approach – not to be underestimated – is 7 cxd5 exd5 8 Bd3 directing play into the Nf3 Exchange Variation. This line will receive coverage in Chapter Six.

White plays 7 Qc2

An aggressive attempt by White with 8 0-0-0

First up is:

6...Nbd7 7 Qc2 c5

It is very logical to attack d4 straightaway as White could be said to have loosened his grip on the d-file by putting his queen on c2. Naturally 7...c6 was also an option.

8 0-0-0 (Diagram 4)

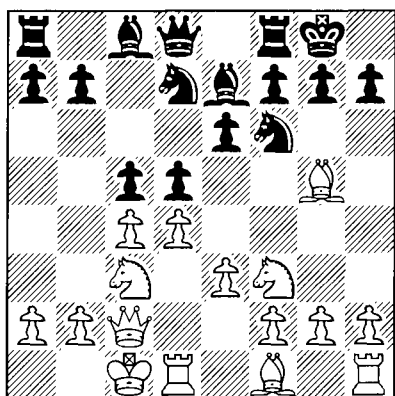


Diagram 4 (B)
Courageous castling

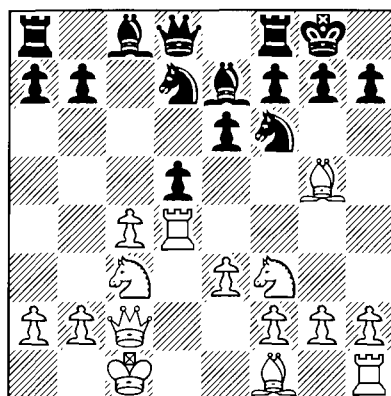


Diagram 5 (B)
An unusual rook activation

A courageous move by White in the style of queenside castling in the Exchange Variation. Here, however, Black has already got in the prescribed counterattack ...c7-c5 'for free'.

On encountering a correct defence, at some point White is likely to renounce the idea of going for broke in a frenzied attack on the black king. Instead he might well refocus his energy on exploiting a static weakness that Black has inflicted on himself in his quest for counterplay. For example, Black's exertions might have left him with an IQP on d5.

However, if Black survives the initial dangers and achieves counterplay, his pieces should have a freedom of action that makes it very hard for White to dampen down the game and turn it into a quiet mathematical exercise; for example, of the kind 'White to play and win the d5-pawn'.

Game 21

□ **T.Hillarp Persson** ■ **W.Arencibia**

Bled Olympiad 2002

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 Nbd7 7 Qc2 c5 8 0-0-0

Before you sit back and enjoy a carnage fit enough for the Roman gladiatorial games, a little quiet reflection is needed to confirm that Black is OK against less violent play. Thus if 8 Rd1 cxd4 9 Nxd4 dxc4 10 Bxc4 Qa5 (hitting the bishop on g5) and with no pawn centre left to speak of, White cannot hope for much; or 8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 Nxd5 exd5 11 dxe5 Nxc5 when Black has an IQP, but

his pieces will easily find active squares: e.g. ...Be6, ...Rac8, ...Ne4 etc.

8...cxd4 9 Rxd4!? (Diagram 5)

A bold reply. White decides that he wants the rook directly involved in the attack on the black king.

9...Qa5

Perhaps Black should throw in the moves 9...h6 10 h4! Qa5. Of course Black shouldn't take the bishop, as he would be quickly mated after 10...hxg5 11 hxg5, if not by the white queen then with 12 Rdh4 and 13 Rh8. However, the possibility of the bishop being nabbed would be a constant theme, and if White ever played Bg5xf6, the recapture ...Be7xf6 would gain time by hitting the rook on d4.

10 cxd5 exd5 11 h4 Nb6?

Moving away a key defender of the kingside. Perhaps best is 11...Bb4 intending 12...Bxc3. Not only would this inflict some damage on the white king's defences, but by breaking the pin on f6 and eliminating the white knight on c3, it also would clear the way for ...Ne4 – a useful way of cutting off the white queen's contact with h7.

12 Rf4! (Diagram 6)

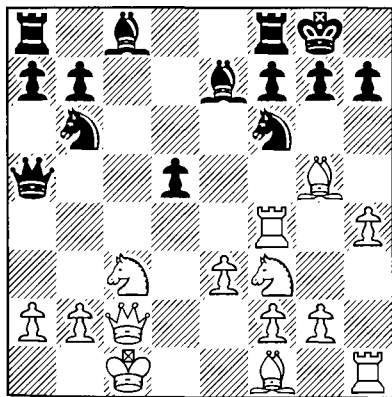


Diagram 6 (B)

Threatening Bxf6, Ng5, etc.

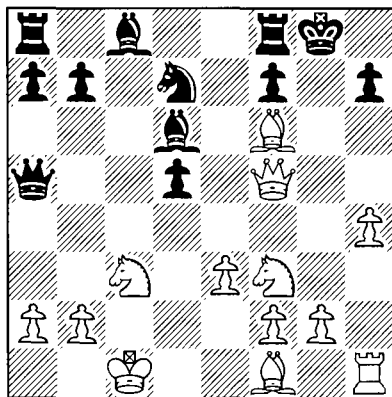


Diagram 7 (B)

Black is busted

Hillarp Persson puts the rook to great use; it's not often that it gets to attack the black knight on f6 in the Queen's Gambit.

12...Bd6?

Amazing. Over the last three moves, the black queen, knight and bishop have all abandoned their defensive duty of guarding f6.

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

Nevertheless, Black was already in a bad way, e.g. 12...Be6? 13 Bxf6 Bxf6 (if 13...gxf6 14 Ng5! fxf6 15 hxf6 or 14...f5 15 Rxf5! and disaster strikes on h7) 14 Ng5! Bxf6 (if 14...g6 then the bishop on f6 hangs) 15 hxf6 g6 16 Rfh4 and h7 drops with a massacre looming.

Perhaps Black should have retracted his last move with 12...Nbd7, but that sort of admission of incompetence is only mentioned in analysis, never played in an actual game.

13 Rxf6! gxf6 14 Bxf6

Even if Black somehow fends off 15 Ng5 and 16 Qxh7 mate, he could never resist the bombardment with Bd3 etc.

14...Nd7

The knight is too late in changing its mind.

15 Qf5! 1-0 (Diagram 7)

It's already time to resign as 15...Nxf6 16 Qg5+ Kh8 17 Qxf6+ Kg8 18 Qxd6 leaves Black material down with a ruined position, while even worse is 15...Ne5 16 Qg5+ Ng6 17 Qh6 and mate follows on g7.

A better response to queenside castling

You will be pleased to hear that improvements are possible for Black, otherwise this would be a very short chapter. Let's return to the position directly after White castled and try the modest-looking move **8...b6!** (Diagram 8)

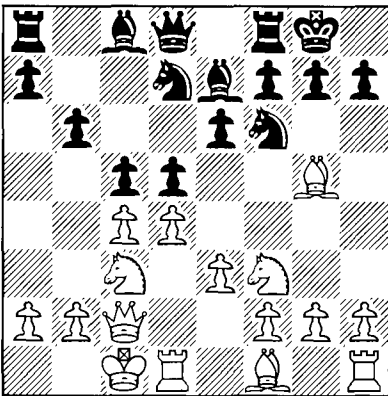


Diagram 8 (W)

Black plays 8...b6!

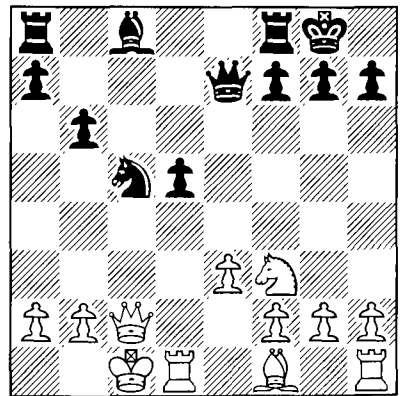


Diagram 9 (W)

The d5-pawn is poisoned

'I really like this move,' says Matthew Sadler. I fully agree, and so do the statistics!

Compare the situation to the 10 0-0-0 line after 5 Bf4 in Chapter Seven. In that case, Black has played ...Nc6 – a more active square for the knight, where it has influence over the d4-square and helps provoke White into wasting a move with a2-a3 to rule out ...Nb4.

Here the black knight is less active on d7. On the other hand, it isn't obstructing the c-file, so a plan involving pawn exchanges on c4 and c5 in combination with ...Rc8 will have more potency. Also, with the knight not occupying c6, the a8-h1 diagonal beckons the bishop on c8, if only it could get there...

The move 8...b6 therefore fits the bill. From an aesthetic point of view, I somehow find it pleasing that the response to White's sabre rattling with 8 0-0-0 should be a calm improvement of the lot of Black's problem child in the Queen's Gambit: the bishop on c8.

Game 22

□ M.Orsag ■ F.Bellini

Montecatini Terme 1997

1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 Nbd7 7 Qc2 c5 8 0-0-0 b6! 9 cxd5

Here are two different treatments of the position by White that fail to impress:

a) 9 e4 dxe4 10 Nxe4 Bb7 11 Bd3 Nxe4 12 Bxe7 Qxe7 13 Bxe4 Bxe4 14 Qxe4 Nf6 when, thanks to the simplification, Black no longer faced any danger on the kingside in L.Ftacnik-Y.Balashov, Trnava 1988.

b) 9 dxc5 Nxc5 10 cxd5 Nxd5 11 h4 Bd7! 12 Nxd5 exd5 13 Rxd5 Rc8 14 Kb1 Ba4! 15 Qc4 Qe8! and in S.Kiselev-A.Kveinys, Warsaw 1991, Black had compensation for the pawn, in view of the fact that White has yet to develop his kingside pieces; and if 16 Be2? Ne4! 17 Qxe4 Bc2+ 18 Qxc2 Rxc2 19 Kxc2 Qc6+ picks up material.

9...Nxd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Nxd5 exd5 12 dxc5 Nxc5 (Diagram 9) 13 Kb1

The d5-pawn is poisoned: 13 Rxd5? Bb7! 14 Rd4 Rac8 with dire threats of pinning the white queen. Now 15 Kb1 fails to 15...Be4, while if 15 Bc4 Ne6 (both attacking the rook and threatening 16...b5) 16 Rh4 g6 White can't deal with 17...Bxf3 (intending 18 gxf3 Qxh4) and 17...b5.

On the face of it, 13...Be6 also looks decisive, since if the rook moves then ...Bxa2 etc. is crushing. However, White has the neat defence 14 Ng5! (threatening mate) 14...g6 15 Nxe6 when he avoids the worst. Remember that moves always have to be carefully scrutinized, no matter how obvious that might seem!

13...Bd7 14 Bd3

Or 14 Rxd5? Bc6 with the ...Be4 idea as above.

14...g6 15 Nd4 Ba4!! (Diagram 10)

The bishop provokes a weakness in the white queenside and then retreats again.

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

You might not think it means much, but this manoeuvre is the difference between Black gaining a big attack and being equal (at best) in a rather passive position.

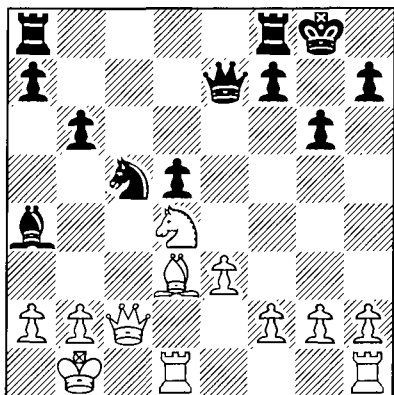


Diagram 10 (W)

Provoking a queenside weakness

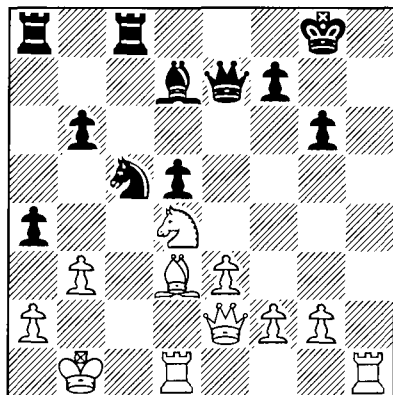


Diagram 11 (W)

Black's attack is faster

16 b3

After 16 Nb3 Rfc8 White could hardly avoid the loss of a pawn.

16...Bd7 17 h4 Rfc8

Thanks to his 15th move, this comes with a time-gaining concrete threat: namely 18...Ne4 and 19...Nc3+ winning the exchange.

18 Qe2 a5!

Another benefit from his 15th move. By ramming the b3-pawn, Black is able to prise open lines around the white king.

19 h5 a4 20 hxg6 hxg6 (Diagram 11)

White has the open h-file but, even so, Black's king has one more pawn to shelter it and, crucially, the black queen can join in the attack much more easily than her white counterpart.

21 Rh2

Losing quickly, but there was already little chance of saving the white king.

21...axb3 22 axb3 Nxd3 23 Rxd3

Or 23 Qxd3 Qa3.

23...Bb5?

Black is tempted by the chance to win the white rook on h2 with a fork, but it was all much simpler: 23...Ra1+ 24 Kxa1 Qa3+ 25 Kb1 Rc1 mate!

24 Nxb5 Qe5 25 Nd4 Qxh2 26 g3 Qh1+ 27 Rd1 Qe4+ 28 Kb2 Qe7 29 Kb1 Ra3 30 Qb2 Qe4+ 31 Nc2 Rxc2 0-1

White has finally caved in. If 32 Qxc2 (or 32 Qxa3 Rd2+ and wins the rook or mates on c2) 32...Ra1+ 33 Kb2 Ra2+ 34 Kxa2 Qxc2+ wins the queen and rook.

If you insist on playing 7 Qc2 h6 ...

Actually, the 'rule' I gave above that Black shouldn't play ...h7-h6 in the Classical is, like all pieces of chess advice, a guideline which shouldn't be followed dogmatically. Richard Réti, who was a study composer as well as a great chess player and thinker, put it aptly: no matter how fatally a chess manoeuvre or idea were criticized, he would always be able to create a study in which it was the winning plan.

It's impossible to think of a single opening principle which isn't repeatedly contradicted by the standard theoretical moves you find in any book.

However, I want to show you a game in which the greatest player of all time tried to bury 7...h6 once and for all. I have sanitized the move order, but he did leave the bishop hanging on g5, honest!

Game 23

□ G.Kasparov ■ L.Portisch

Brussels 1986

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Qc2 h6 8 cxd5! (Diagram 12)

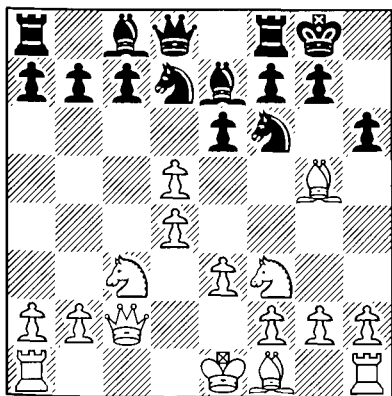


Diagram 12 (B)

An unexpected piece offer

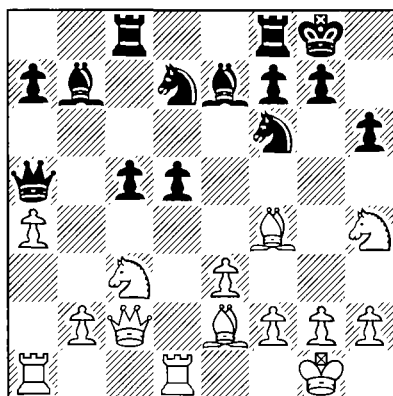


Diagram 13 (B)

The knight heads for d6

Later, the Hungarian Grandmaster playing Black candidly described the thoughts that were racing through his head after he was hit by 8 cxd5:

'After 8...hxg5 9 dxe6 fxe6 10 Nxg5 he has two pawns and an attack. I don't like it when Kasparov is attacking... if I accept the sacrifice maybe I will lose very quickly in a brilliant game. Oh, what should I do now? Well, maybe I had better take back the pawn. Accepting such a sacrifice needs more profound analysis.'

Kasparov's own comment was also of psychological interest: 'I was rather sure that if Portisch spent at least two minutes he would refuse the sacrifice. People usually take pieces without hesitation.'

Taking Portisch's analysis one move further, the position after 8...hxg5 9 dxe6 fxe6 10 Nxg5 Nb6 11 h4 is regarded as unclear. Nonetheless, I think Black would have a very hard time defending it. White has a lot of easy moves like 0-0-0, Bd3, h5-h6 etc., while Black has no obvious way to consolidate his pieces.

The game actually continued:

8...exd5 9 Bf4 c5 10 Be2 b6 11 0-0 Bb7 12 Rfd1 Rc8 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 a4!

An annoying move designed to hit 14...Nb6 with 15 a5. Here 14...Re8 looks solid enough, but Portisch erred:

14...Qa5? 15 Nh4! (Diagram 13)

White exploits the absence of the black queen from events in the centre to build up dangerous pressure on the d6-square.

15...Red8 16 Nf5 Bf8 17 Nb5 Ne8 18 Bd6!

Clearing the way for a knight fork that will eliminate the defender of the d5-pawn.

18...Nxd6 19 Nfxd6 Rcb8 20 Nxb7 Rxb7 21 Rxd5 Rdb8 22 Qd2 Qxd2 23 Rxd2 Nf6 24 Ra2 (Diagram 14)

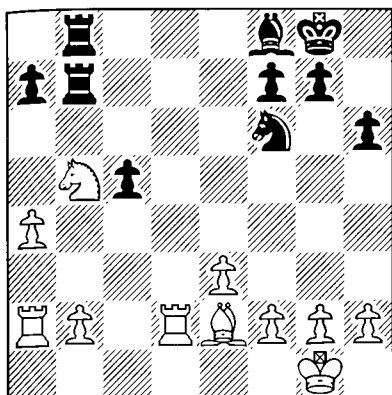
And Kasparov exploited his extra pawn to grind out the win on move 64.

According to my database, no one has yet dared to take the piece on offer at move eight. Somehow I think Korchnoi would have nabbed the piece 'on principle' if Kasparov had made the offer against him – and without thinking for two minutes!

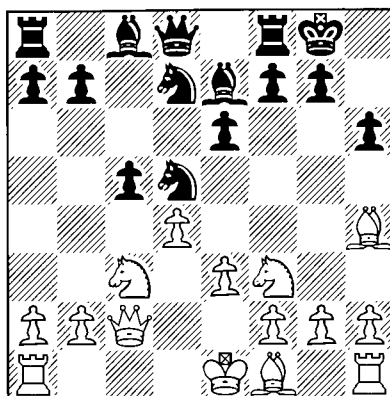
Actually, there have been relatively few games with 8 cxd5, not I imagine because White doesn't believe in the strength of the offer, but rather because he assumes it will be declined, and wants to keep the tension between the c4- and d5-pawns.

However, I think that Black is being let off the hook somewhat. For example, M.Carlsen-C.Hansen, Skanderborg 2005, went 8 Bh4 (rather than 8 cxd5, but why not sacrifice a piece at 14 years old?) 8...c5 9 Rd1 Qa5 10 cxd5 Nxd5 11 Bxe7 Nxe7 12 Be2 Nd5 13 0-0 Nxc3 14 bxc3 b6 15 Nd2 Ba6 and Black equalized comfortably.

In this sequence, if White tries the capture on d5 one move later (when it doesn't leave the bishop hanging), after 9 cxd5 Black can simplify with 9...Nxd5! **(Diagram 15)** 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Nxd5 exd5 12 dxc5 Nxc5 13 Be2 Be6 and, thanks to the exchanges, has an easier life than Portisch did versus Kasparov.

**Diagram 14 (B)**

White is a pawn up

**Diagram 15 (W)**

Position after 9...Nxd5!

In contrast, going back to the piece offer 8 exd5, there 8...Nxd5? just drops the c7-pawn to 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Qxc7. So you see there is a positional basis to the bishop sacrifice: Kasparov wasn't just showboating or trying to scare Portisch – though he achieved both of these as side effects!

As a final word on the subject, if you insist on ...h7-h6, it would be better to play it earlier, before White can offer the piece; for example 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 Nf3 Be7 6 e3 h6! 7 Bh4 0-0 8 Qc2 c5 9 cxd5 when 9...Nxd5! is the simplifying method discussed above.

White plays 7 Rc1

The double-edged 7...a6

After 7 Rc1, we shall focus on the usual move 7...c6, but first of all let's look at something slightly offbeat.

Game 24

□ F.Berkes ■ J.Glud

World Junior Championships, Istanbul 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Rc1 a6 (Diagram 16)

An interesting idea, with the intention of freeing himself with ...d5xc4, ...b7-b5,

...Bb7 and ...c7-c5.

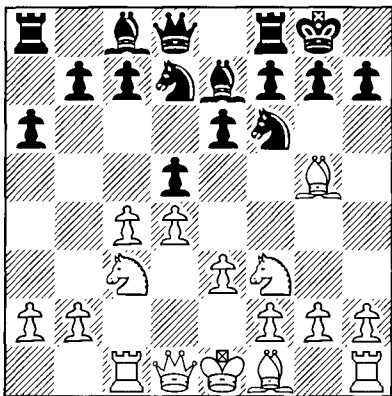


Diagram 16 (W)

The double-edged 7...a6

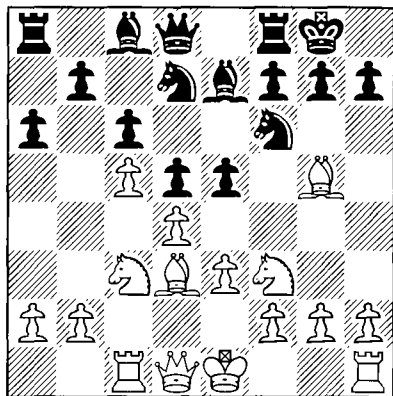


Diagram 17 (W)

Black breaks with ...e6-e5

8 c5!?

This space-gaining plan works superbly after the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 Nbd7 7 c5! (see Chapter Seven). Here, with the white bishop on g5, Black can readily counterattack in the centre.

Instead 8 cxd5 exd5 (it cannot be repeated too many times that 8...Nxd5? drops a pawn to 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Rxc7) 9 Bd3 c6 is the Exchange Variation yet again, but with Black having gone ...a7-a6 and White Rc1. One would imagine that, in the event of White trying for a Minority Attack with b2-b4 etc., this difference would favour Black, as the white rook might be better on b1 than c1, whereas ...a7-a6 is an integral part of Black's defensive plan against b4-b5.

8...c6

Defending d5 again is the necessary prelude to Black's next move.

9 Bd3 e5! (Diagram 17)

The thematic freeing move. Opening up the centre is not without its dangers, but it is far preferable than just watching as White builds up with 0-0, b2-b4, a2-a4 and b4-b5, etc. In fact, if allowed, White might even throw in Bf4!? to prevent Black changing his mind about ...e6-e5.

10 dxe5

The correct way to capture, as a double exchange on e5 would free the d7-square for the knight on f6.

10...Ne8 11 h4!

White has to introduce attacking ideas against the black king to keep up his initiative, as after 11 Bxe7 Qxe7 Black gets to capture on c5 or e5 with equality.

11...Nxc5 12 Bb1

In the Queen's Gambit, as in most openings, this bishop is too precious to be exchanged for a black knight without a good reason. Here it is needed to keep up pressure on h7.

12...Ne6? (Diagram 18)

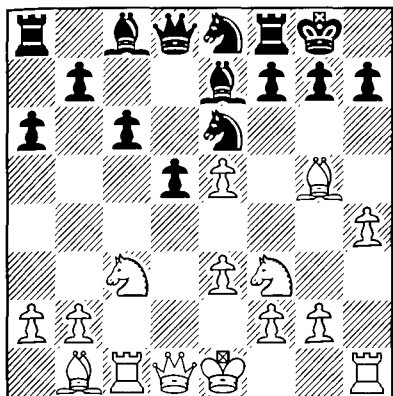


Diagram 18 (W)

An instructive mistake

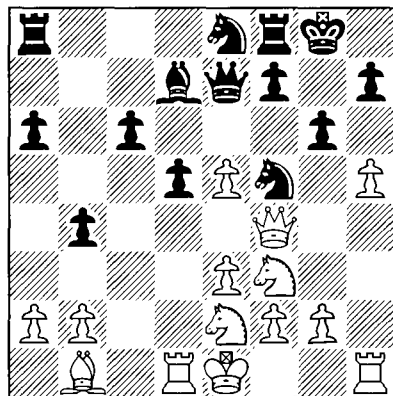


Diagram 19 (B)

The end draws near

An instructive mistake. A shrewd defence of the king against a direct attack doesn't just entail battening down the hatches and surrounding the monarch with bodyguards. It also involves two other factors:

- 1) Preventing the opponent bringing up reinforcements.
- 2) Counteraction in the centre.

It is an old axiom that a wing attack can't hope to succeed unless a player controls at least two of the four centre squares. That may sound too simplistic, but it reminds us that neither the aggressor nor defender can afford to ignore what is going on in the centre.

For example, consider the large number of occasions that White castles queenside and plays h2-h4 in this book: Black repeatedly saves himself not by rushing all his pieces over to his king, but rather by methodically strengthening his hold on the centre. (Indeed, after 0-0-0, the move ...Rc8 is a double whammy for White: not

only is the black rook centralized in good style, it is also aiming directly at the white king on c1.)

Returning to 12...Ne6, Black hands over a good square to the white queen which she utilizes on the next move, while also diminishing any counterplay he might have achieved in the centre.

Black's cry should have been: 'give me development and a strong centre, and then it won't matter if my king's palace is ramshackle!' That could have been granted with 12...f6! 13 Qc2 g6 (you see, a weakening of the dark squares around the king, but it does allow the bishop on c8 to join in the battle) 14 Bh6 Bf5 15 Qe2 Bxb1 16 Rxb1 Ng7 17 h5 g5!? 18 0-0 fxe5 19 Nxe5 Qd6 20 Ng4 Rae8 when the black king-side is loose, but it is by no means easy for White to break open lines; meanwhile both black rooks are involved in the game. Black came out on top in V.Popov-R.Ziatdinov, Voronezh 2004.

In contrast, Berkes has it all pretty much his own way in the game.

13 Qa4!

Now White schemes to slay the black king, while preventing any 'protest' by the black pieces in the centre.

13...Bd7 14 Rd1

The aforementioned restraint, which also obliges Glud to worry about a possible e3-e4.

14...g6 15 Bxe7 Qxe7 16 h5 b5 17 Qg4 b4 18 Ne2 N6g7 19 Qg3 Nf5 20 Qf4 (Diagram 19)

The white queen has finally won its battle with the black knight.

20...f6

The potential threats along the h-file can't be ignored, but now the black centre caves in.

21 hxg6 hxg6 22 g4 fxe5 23 Qxe5 1-0

A rather dismal game for fans of the Queen's Gambit Declined, but 12...f6 in the notes is very interesting.

The solid 7...c6

A basic Classical Defence position is reached after:

6...Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 (Diagram 20) 8 Bd3

You might imagine that there is a useful waiting move White might try here, so that after ...d5xc4 he could recapture Bf1xc4 'in one go'. However, Black can also wait, e.g. 8 Qc2 a6!? when White has to reckon with the plan of queenside expansion with ...b7-b5, perhaps after the exchange ...d5xc4, Bxc4, or immediately with 9...b5!?

If White prevents ...b7-b5 with (8 Qc2 a6) 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Bd3 we have an Exchange Variation pawn structure, but it isn't a particularly good version for White as he would prefer to have his rook on b1 where it supports b2-b4 (see Chapter Six for more details).

8...dxc4

Black concedes the d5-pawn centre in order to achieve more freedom for his pieces. This is an idea so characteristic of the Queen's Gambit Declined that it is no wonder that Black can also quite reasonably play 2...dxc4, the Queen's Gambit Accepted. However, we would argue that it is all the better for being delayed.

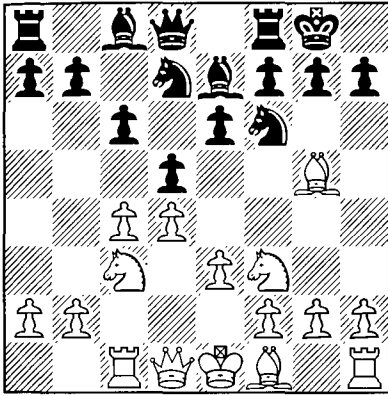


Diagram 20 (W)

The solid 7...c6

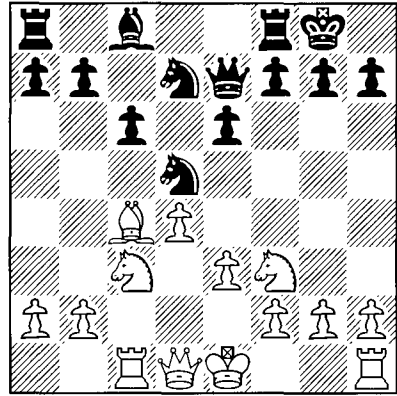


Diagram 21 (W)

Position after 10...Qxe7

9 Bxc4 Nd5!

A celebrated follow-up to his previous move. Putting the knight on d5 to exchange off a pair of pieces is known as the Capablanca freeing manoeuvre, as the Cuban maestro started adopting it around 1917. It forms a nice strategic accompaniment to the ...Ne4 freeing move played by his great rival Lasker (see Chapter Three).

Instead, after 9...b5 10 Bd3 a6, White can prevent the equalizing ...c6-c5 with 11 a4!, keeping a slight edge.

10 Bxe7 Qxe7 (Diagram 21) 11 0-0

White has also tried avoiding the exchange of knights, at least for a move, with 11 Ne4!?. Then after 11...N5f6 (a sensible retreat that keeps the other knight to enforce ...e6-e5) 12 Ng3 (or 12 Nxf6+ Qxf6 13 0-0 e5 14 Bb3 exd4 15 Qxd4 Qxd4 16 Nxd4 and Black can mobilize his queenside pieces with fairly equal chances after ...Nf6 and ...Bd7) 12...e5 13 0-0 exd4 14 Nf5 Qd8 15 N5xd4 Nb6 16 Bd3 Qe7 17 Qc2 Bg4 18

a3 Rad8 and Black's set-up successfully resisted a very strong opponent in V.Topalov-A.Yermolinsky, Yerevan 1996.

11...Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5 (Diagram 22)

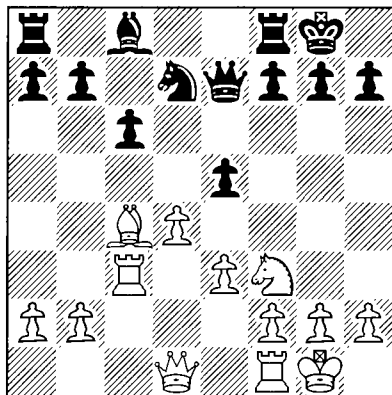


Diagram 22 (W)

The standard freeing move

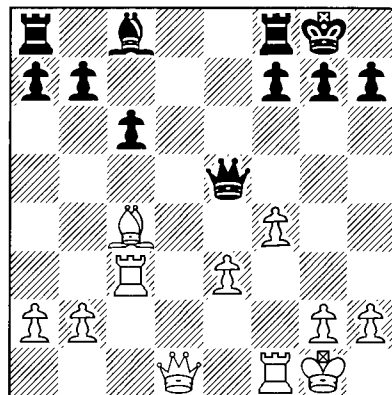


Diagram 23 (B)

The Rubinstein Attack

The standard move in the Classical Defence. The alternative, 12...b6, is similar to a common line in the Lasker Defence, but the fact that the black pawn is on h7 here, rather than h6 as in the Lasker, makes a significant difference. After 13 Qc2! Black is unable to play the solid 13...Bb7, as then 14 Bd3 h6 (14...Nf6 15 Ne5) 15 Be4 leaves the c6-pawn in great jeopardy. So Black would have to play 13...c5, but then after 14 dxc5 Nxc5 15 b4 Nd7 16 Bd3 Nf6 17 a3 White's possession of the c-file gives him a strong initiative.



TIP: In the Classical, 12...e5 is the only good freeing move.

In this crucial position, we shall look at 13 dxe5 and 13 Bb3.

The Rubinstein Attack: 13 dxe5

The Rubinstein Attack occurs after **13 dxe5** (13 Nxe5 leads to the same thing) **13...Nxe5 14 Nxe5 Qxe5 15 f4 (Diagram 23)**. This was first played by the famous Polish Grandmaster around 1908.

Now Black had better be careful. For example 15...Qe7? 16 f5! intends 17 f6 to break open the black king's defences, followed (after 17...gxf6) by moves like Qh5 and then Bd3 or e3-e4 and Rg3, etc. If Black stops it with 16...Qf6, then after 17 e4 the bishop on c8 is shut in, while White can build up for e4-e5.

Let's see how, with the aid of more than 80 years of theory, Black was able to equalize in the following game with 15...Qe4!

Game 25

□ Z.Franco Ocampos ■ D.Campora

Ponferrada 1992

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5 13 dxe5 Nxe5 14 Nxe5 Qxe5 15 f4 Qe4!
(Diagram 24)

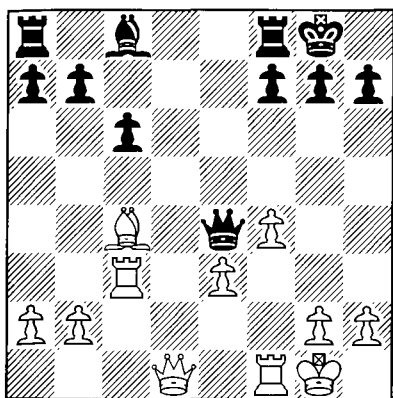


Diagram 24 (W)

Blocking the white pawns

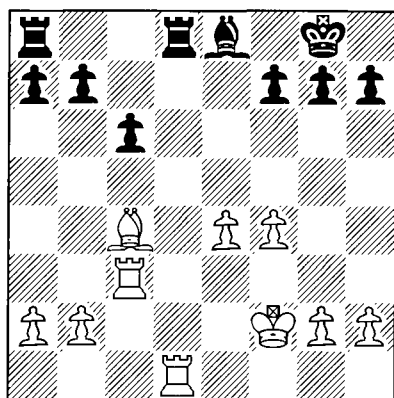


Diagram 25 (W)

Black has equalized

The queen holds back the white centre pawns. It seems at first glance that she can be easily dislodged, but it is no simple task, one point being that if 16 Bd3 Qxe3+ 16 Bd3 Qxe3+ 17 Kh1 Qe7 18 f5 Qf6 blocks the attack, as White no longer has the e4-e5 move.

16 Qe2

Another variation runs 16 Bb3 Bf5 17 Qh5 g6 18 Qh6 Rad8 19 Bc2 Qd5 20 e4 Bxe4 21 Rh3 when White has breached the kingside defences, but the power of centralization saves Black: 21...Qc5+ 22 Rf2 Rfe8 23 Qxh7+ Kf8 24 Qh6+ Ke7 25 Rc3 Qd4! with unclear play – note that the black king can run to the safety of c7 if checked.

16...Bf5!

The stationing of the bishop on f5 is absolutely vital for Black's defence.

17 Bd3

A violent attempt to break the blockade on the f-file by 17 g4?! is certainly pushing White's luck: 17...Be6 18 Bd3 Qb4 19 f5 Bd5 20 f6 g6 may look threatening to Black's king, but as long as he avoids being mated on g7, it is White who will have problems holding together his very loose position. The old game M.Euwe-H.Steiner, Hastings 1945/46, continued 21 a3 Qb6 22 Qf2 Rfe8 23 Bb1 Re6 24 Qf4 and now 24...Qxb2!, threatening mate on g2, looks excellent for Black, e.g. 25 Rc2 Qe5 when 26 Qh6 fails to 26...Rxf6.

17...Qd5 18 e4 Qd4+ 19 Qf2

The game now burns out to equality.

19...Qxf2+ 20 Kxf2 Bd7 21 Rd1 Rfd8 22 Bc4 Be8 (Diagram 25) 23 Rxd8 Rxd8 24 Rd3 ½-½

White holds the centre: 13 Bd3

White quietly drops back his bishop, getting it out of the way of a time-gaining ...Nb6 move, and clears the c-file for his rook. Now Black can choose between 13...exd4 and 13...e4.

A difficult line for Black: 13...exd4 14 exd4

12...e5 13 Bd3 exd4 14 exd4 (Diagram 26)

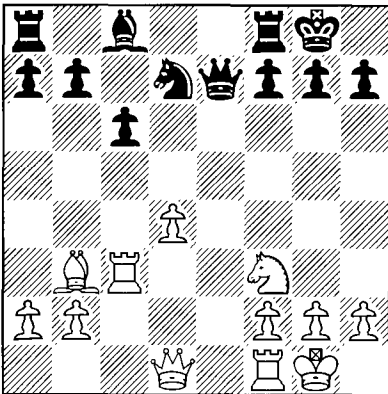


Diagram 26 (B)

A difficult line for Black

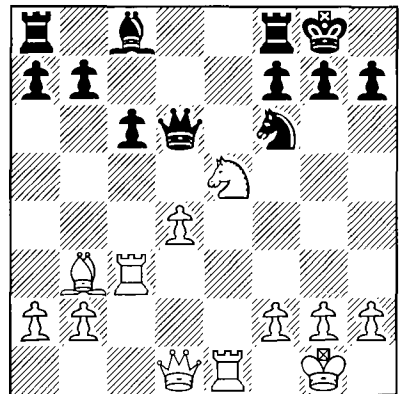


Diagram 27 (B)

White is very active

I have personal experience of this position (albeit via a Lasker with the pawn on h6) and I have to tell you that things are by no means easy for Black. True, White

has an IQP and two minor pieces have been exchanged, which generally speaking is good news for Black; but White is also very active and can target the kingside and the f7-square in particular.

A typical sequence is:

14...Nf6

14...Nb6 is considered below.

15 Re1 Qd6 16 Ne5 (Diagram 27)

Already Black has to watch out for tricks; for example, 16...Bf5? 17 Nxf7! Rxf7 18 Bxf7+ Kxf7 19 Qb3+ Kf8 20 Qxb7 Rb8 21 Qxa7 Rxb2 22 Rxc6! Qxc6 23 Qa3+ Kf7 24 Qxb2 and White's rook and three pawns far outweigh the two black pieces.

Actually, in A.Karpov-D.Campora, Villarrobledo (rapid) 1997, the former World Champion spurned the capture on f7. Did he overlook it, or was he waiting for a bigger blunder?! After all, according to Spassky, 'David Bronstein had once confided to Keres, who in his turn had chortled for an hour over it, his 'theory' that you shouldn't refute a weak move by the opponent as it is merely the introduction to an even weaker one'!

What actually happened in the Karpov game was fully consistent with the 'Bronstein doctrine':

16...Bf5? 17 Rf3 Bg4? 18 Rxf6! Qxe5

The only way, as 18...Qxf6 19 Qxg4 leaves Black two pieces down for a rook.

19 dxe5 Bxd1 20 Bxf7+! Rxf7 21 Rxf7 Kxf7 22 Rxd1 Ke6 23 f4 (Diagram 28)

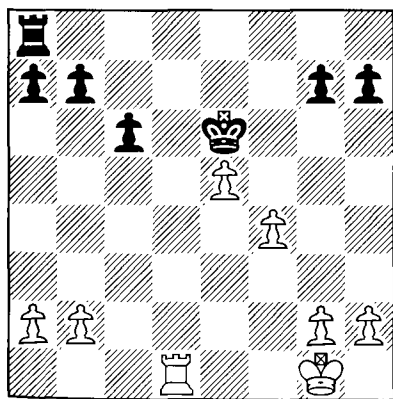


Diagram 28 (B)

White is a pawn up

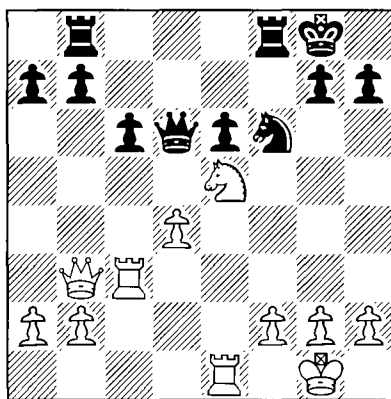


Diagram 29 (W)

Black faces a difficult defence

And a pawn up with Karpov's technique meant only one possible result. It was 1-0 after 52 moves.

Instead of 16...Bf5?, Matthew Sadler has recommended 16...Be6 17 Bxe6 fxe6 (alas, if 17...Qxe6 18 Ng6) 18 Qb3 Rab8 or 18...Qe7 when he thinks that Black should be OK, as he only has one weakness on e6 and possible counterplay down the f-file. I guess a super-GM like Matthew might defend it OK, but it looks a tall order for the rest of us; e.g. 18...Rab8 (**Diagram 29**) 19 Rce3 Nd5 20 Re4 Rf6 21 Nd3 b6 (another weakness, but he wants to stop Nc5) 22 g3 Rc8 23 R1e2 Rc7 24 h4 h5 25 a3 g6 26 Qc4 c5 27 dxc5 bxc5 and Black had managed to grow two more weak pawns in I.Khenkin-S.Sulskis, Koszalin 1998.

Going right back to move 14, I suspect that 14...Nb6 15 Re1 Qd8 16 Ne5 Nd5 17 Rg3 Be6 is a more solid way for Black to play. Black survived the siege after 18 Qd2 Qh4 19 Bc2 Rad8 20 Re4 Qf6 21 Ng4 Bxg4 22 Rxxg4 g6 23 h4 Rd6 24 h5 Rfd8 in V.Malakhatko-E.Dervishi, Bergamo 2004. Still, it wasn't much fun, and White got to make all the pleasant attacking moves.

A better plan for Black: 13...e4

It seems to me that it is a fundamental mistake for Black to open the e-file with 13...exd4. Instead, after 13 Bb3, he should try **13...e4! 14 Nd2 Nf6 (Diagram 30)**

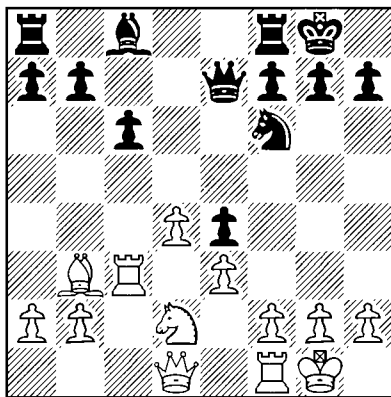


Diagram 30 (W)

A better plan for Black

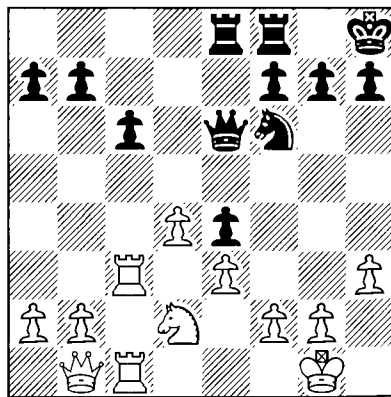


Diagram 31 (W)

Black plans ...f7-f5-f4

A hard strategic battle is in prospect. The black e4-pawn can be attacked with the moves Qb1, Bc2 and even Rc5 and Re5 (this rook manoeuvre gains in strength if it attacks a black bishop on f5).

Meanwhile, Black can defend the pawn with ...Nf6 and then perhaps launch the quirky manoeuvre ...Bg4!, hitting the white queen and clearing the way for ...Rae8 or even sometimes ...Be2 and ...Bd3. Note the importance of the ...Nd7 move in

reply to Rc5.

Let's look at some practical examples.

Game 26

□ **J.Capablanca** ■ **G.Stahlberg**

Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5 13 Bb3 e4 14 Nd2 Nf6

I've chosen this game as it's interesting to see Capablanca do battle against his own freeing manoeuvre.

15 Qb1!? Bg4

Still the best idea, despite the absence of the white queen from d1.

16 Re1 Kh8!? 17 h3 Be6 18 Bxe6

If 18 Nxe4 Bf5 regains the pawn in a favourable way. This wouldn't have worked with the black king on g8, as 19 Nxf6 in reply is check. Hence the strength of Black's 16th move.

18...Qxe6 19 Rec1 Rae8! (Diagram 31)

A highly interesting moment. It would be easy to criticize this move, as it gives greater licence to White's probing on the queenside, and recommend in its place 19...Rfe8, which keeps the other rook to defend things on the queenside. However, in what follows, it becomes clear that potential counterplay with ...f5-f4 is what keeps Black afloat. For that to work, a rook is needed on f8.

As the queenside is going to fall under pressure after b4 and b5 etc. whether or not a black rook stays on a8 or thereabouts, we should consider 19...Rae8 as a high-class decision.

20 Ra3 a6 21 Nb3 Nd5 22 Nc5 Qe7 23 Rb3 b6 24 Na4 b5 25 Nc3 f5! (Diagram 32)

The cavalry arrives in the shape of a counterattack on f2 just in time before the situation gets desperate on the queenside.

26 Nxd5 cxd5 27 Rc5 f4 28 exf4

If 28 Rxd5 Black can choose between 28...f3!? and 28...Qf7 with an attack down the f-file similar to the game.

28 exf4 Rxf4 29 Rxd5 Qf6 30 Re5 ½-½

Black agreed to a draw offered by his famous adversary. Despite being a pawn down, he could have played on with 30...Rf8, with some dangerous ideas along the f-file once f2 drops.



TIP: A great player always knows when to offer a draw!

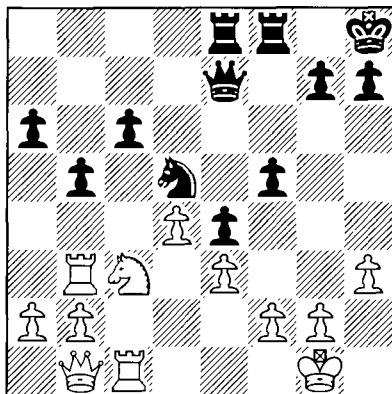


Diagram 32 (W)

Kingside counterplay

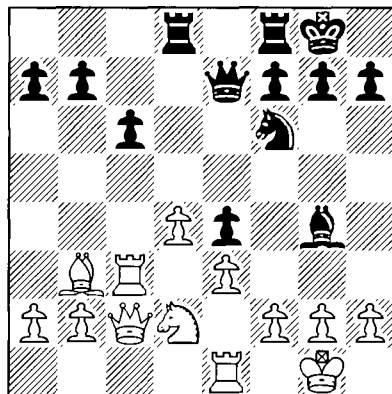


Diagram 33 (W)

Position after 16...Rad8

The next game shows that the 13...e4 plan is still perfectly viable today.

Game 27

□ **A.Lahiri** ■ **S.Irwanto**

Kuala Lumpur 2005

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5 13 Bb3 e4 14 Nd2 Nf6 15 Qc2

The other attacking square for the white queen.

15...Bg4 16 Re1 Rad8 (Diagram 33)

You will recall that, with the white queen on b1, Stahlberg played 16...Kh8 in the game above. Thanks to his opponent's poor reply, Irwanto is able to get by without spending a tempo on the king move.

17 Nf1? Be6

Black takes advantage of his opponent's passive knight move to offer the exchange of bishops, which wins the d5-square for his knight and facilitates the advance of the f-pawn by breaking the pin on f7.

18 Rc1 Bxb3 19 Qxb3 Nd5 20 Rc5 Rd6 21 Qc4 g6 22 a3??

Why on earth not 22 b4 straightaway?

22...h5

A natural space-gaining move, though 22...Kh8, followed by 23...f5 was also possible.

23 b4 a6 24 a4 b5

Scuppering any chance of b4-b5 by White. Now Qc2, here or later, fails to ...Nxb4, which means that the c6-pawn holds firm and Black has it all his own way.

25 Qb3 Qe6 26 Nd2 f5! (Diagram 34)

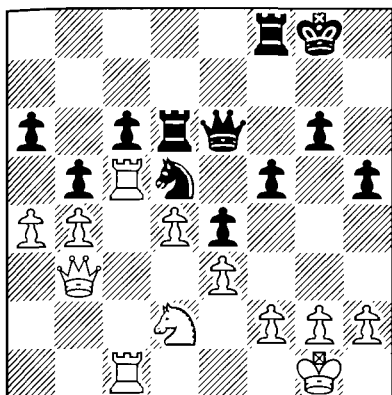


Diagram 34 (W)

...f5-f4 is coming again

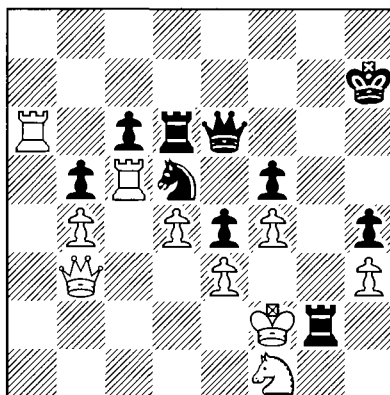


Diagram 35 (W)

White loses the queen

Shades of Capablanca-Stahlberg, but much more promising for Black. White's initiative has foundered on the queenside, which means he has no answer to Black's kingside pawn advances.

27 g3 Kg7 28 axb5 axb5 29 Ra1

The best chance was 29 Nb1! to challenge the black knight with 30 Nc3.

29...Rf7 30 Ra6

It actually makes matters worse for White that he moves this rook away from the defence of his first rank.

30...g5! 31 f4

White avoids being steamrollered with 31...f5, but the resulting open g-file proves lethal.

31...gxf4 32 gxf4 Kh7 33 Kf2 Rg7 34 Nf1 h4?!

Missing the immediate 34...Rg2+!

35 h3 Rg2+! 0-1 (Diagram 35)

The white queen is lost after 36 Kxg2 Nxf4+ 37 exf4 Qxb3, or 36 Ke1 Re2+! 37 Kd1 (37 Kxe2 Nxf4+) 37...Nxe3+.

Finally, we should look at an immediate excursion by the white rook along the c-file.

Game 28

□ A.Kharitonov ■ H.Pfleger

Royan 1988

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5 13 Bb3 e4 14 Nd2 Nf6 15 Rc5!?

With the immediate threat of 16 Re5, winning the e4-pawn.

15...Bg4 16 Qc2 Nd7! (Diagram 36)

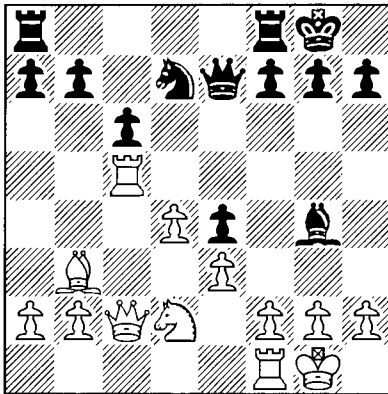


Diagram 36 (W)

Driving the white rook back

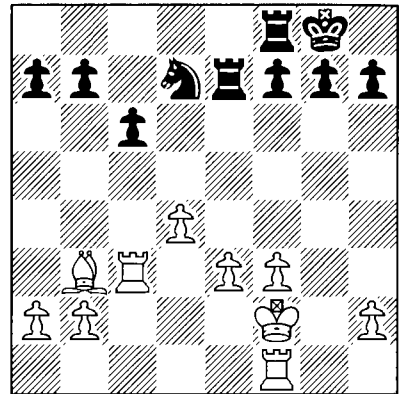


Diagram 37 (B)

Black can hold a draw

A typical riposte in this variation to drive back the white rook.

17 Rc3 Rae8

Also interesting is 17...Be2!? and 18...Bd3. After all, Capablanca was keen to prevent the bishop manoeuvre with Re1 in the above example, which must say something!

18 Qxe4!

A simplifying combination that leads to a critical position.

18...Qxe4 19 Nxe4 Rxe4 20 f3 Bxf3 21 gxf3 Re7 22 Kf2 (Diagram 37)

The queens are off the board, so Black no longer has to worry about being mated; he can also put his pieces on sensible, centralized squares without any opposition. On the other hand, the white centre is pretty and a bishop is always preferred over a knight in this type of position.

Let's see how the experienced German Grandmaster neutralized White's winning

attempt:

23 Rg1 h6

As will be seen, Black intends ...Nd5 and so doesn't want White to be able to attack the d5-square with Rg5.

24 a3 Rd8 25 Rc5 Kf8 26 Ba2 Nd5

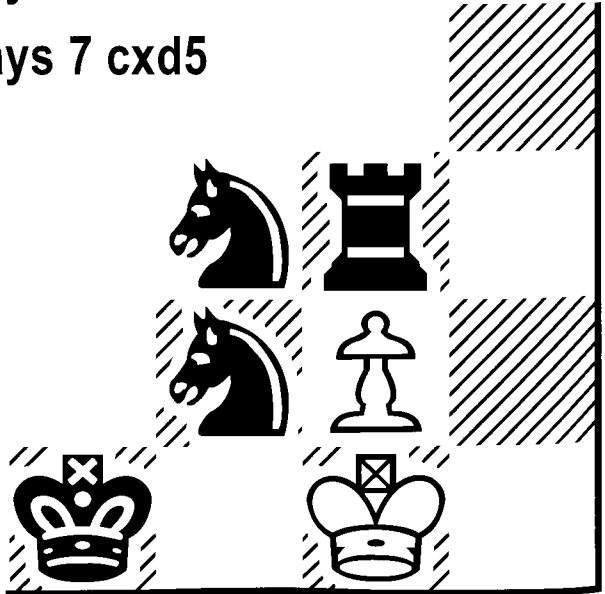
Despite some temporary discomfort, Black is confident he can hold the rook and pawn endgame, and then the king and pawn endgame that follows it.

27 Bxd5 Rxd5 28 Rxd5 cxd5 29 Rc1 Rd7 30 Rc8+ Ke7 31 Kg3 Kf6 32 Re8 Rc7 33 Re5 Re7 34 Rxe7 Kxe7 35 Kg4 g6 36 e4 f6 37 h4 h5+ 38 Kf4 Ke6 39 b3 b6 40 a4 a5 41 Kg3 ½-½

Chapter Five

The Cambridge Springs Defence

- Introduction
- Black's exciting strategy
- White plays 7 Nd2
- White plays 7 cxd5



Introduction

The starting moves of the Cambridge Springs Defence are **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 e3 c6 6 Nf3 Qa5 (Diagram 1)**

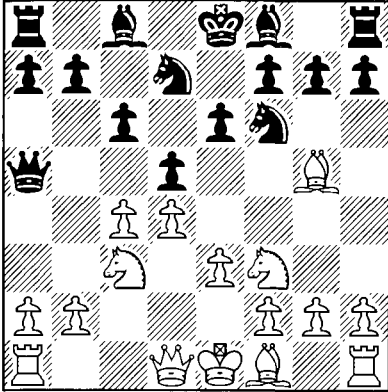


Diagram 1 (W)

The Cambridge Springs

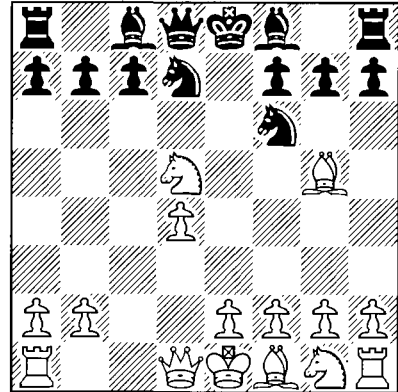


Diagram 2 (B)

Has Black blundered a pawn?

Black quickly develops both his knights and bolsters the d5-point with ...c7-c6, which at the same time clears the way for the queen to go to an active post on a5.

Taking things to an extreme, you could say that Black is trying to prove that Bg5 was a mistake: not only by targeting the bishop itself, but also by attacking the knight on c3, which can no longer be defended by Bd2.

Already we need to point out a trap contained in these moves, which sets the tone for this tricky opening.

After 4...Nbd7, it looks as if White can just win a pawn with 5 cxd5 exd5 6 Nxd5 (**Diagram 2**) – so much you might think for Black's plan of strengthening the d5-point in the Queen's Gambit!

But not so fast with your grumbling: actually we need to write the move as 6 Nxd5?? because White is dropping a piece after 6...Nxd5! 7 Bxd8 Bb4+ (this counterattack picks up the white queen) 8 Qd2 Bxd2+ (8...Kxd8 is possibly even better) 9 Kxd2 Kxd8. Yep, have a count up and you will see it is true. White has lost a huge number of games through falling for this trap. In my database I did see that one bright spark played 10 e4 and went on to win as White – after all doesn't he have a strong centre and a king nicely centralized in the endgame!? I'm joking of course.

Don't get too excited, though, if your opponent plays 5 cxd5 as it probably just

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

means that after 5...exd5 he intends 6 e3, which directs play into the Exchange Variation. Here you should play 6...c6 as this time it is worth stopping 7 Nxd5.

It should be mentioned that another move order is possible with 4...c6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Nf3 Qa5. If White plays 4 Nf3, rather than 4 Bg5, it's best to play 4...Nbd7 5 Bg5 c6 etc., as after 4...c6 White could switch to the Meran Variation of the Slav Defence.



WARNING: If you play the Cambridge Springs as Black, don't insert 6...h6? 7 Bh4 Qa5. You want the white bishop on g5 where it is a potential target after ...Ne4 or ...d5xc4.

The name of the opening

According to my database, this defence was first played by Emanuel Lasker as Black in a simultaneous game against Albert Hodges in New York 1892. So, if fate – or I should say the fickle whims of the chess public in naming openings – had so chosen, this chapter might also have been called the Lasker Defence.

Instead the variation is named after the resort town of Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, where it was used at a big international tournament in 1904. By the way, the Cambridge Springs tournament was won by Frank Marshall, who finished two points ahead of David Janowski and the World Champion Emanuel Lasker – probably the greatest success by an American player between the eras of Morphy and Fischer.

The Cambridge Springs has also played a key role in two important matches: the Capablanca-Alekhine World Championship match of 1927, and the Kasparov-Smyslov Candidates Final match of 1984.

Queen's Bishop friendly?

Not really. Black is playing energetic, interesting chess; he hasn't spared a thought for the poor bishop encased on c8. But he won't forget the unhappy cleric forever: the advance ...c6-c5 or ...e6-e5 will begin to free him.

Black's exciting strategy

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 e3 c6 6 Nf3 Qa5 (Diagram 3)

It may seem odd to move the queen out so early, but this move has a sound positional basis, whilst also setting White some devilish tactical problems.

Black pins the white knight on c3 while breaking the pin on his own knight on f6. Because he hasn't committed himself to ...Be7 (the usual move in the Queen's Gambit Declined), he can further harass the white knight with ...Bb4 and ...Ne4. As regards the white bishop on g5, it really is the case of the hunter hunted. The

following gamelet has recurred throughout chess history.

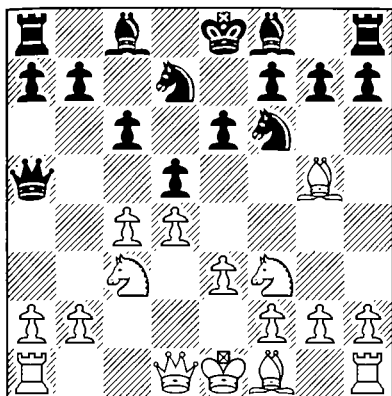


Diagram 3 (W)

Position after 6...Qa5

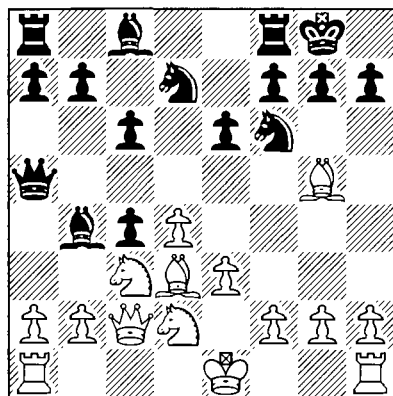


Diagram 4 (W)

A really great trap

A really great trap

□ T.Grabuzova ■ M.Godena

Online blitz game 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 c6 4 Nc3 Nf6 5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 e3 Qa5 7 Nd2 Bb4 8 Qc2 0-0 9 Bd3??

A logical developing move that has worked ten thousand times before in the Queen's Gambit. Nevertheless, even in an Internet blitz game this is a mighty slip from the Russian Women Grandmaster.

9...dxc4! 0-1 (Diagram 4)

Suddenly both white bishops are hanging, and if 10 Bxf6 cxd3! is a killing zwischenzug, to be followed by 11...Nxf6.

No doubt White forgot about the bishop because she was obsessed with the c3-square – it doesn't occur to her that the real danger was on the other wing 'through' the d5-pawn. In effect, 6...Qa5! is a wonderful bluff: it appears the queen is looking diagonally towards c3, when all the time she is looking through the d5-pawn at the white bishop.

I once fell for the trap in a quickplay tournament, though not to the extent of losing a bishop by force. At the time I was a young and inexperienced player, with a very unhealthy belief in sticking to chess principles at all costs. The game went:

□ N.McDonald ■ A.N.Other

London 1981

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 c6 5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 e3 Qa5

Here I remember feeling very uncomfortable. I knew 'on principle' that the black queen move had to be wrong, and it was my duty to punish it. On the other hand, my tactical awareness told me that ...Bb4 and ...Ne4, piling up on c3, looked very threatening. I was worried but anxious to prove my advantage at the same time. It is always a horrible feeling when your tactical sense and your positional sense are pulling you in opposite directions!

Incidentally, my 'knowledge' also told me that I mustn't consider playing Bxf6, as giving up a knight for a bishop was always a bad thing. Obviously I hadn't discovered Capablanca or Kasparov's games in the Cambridge Springs at the time.

7 Bd3? Ne4! (Diagram 5)

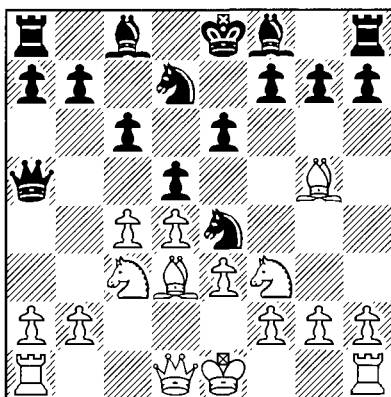


Diagram 5 (W)

White is in trouble again

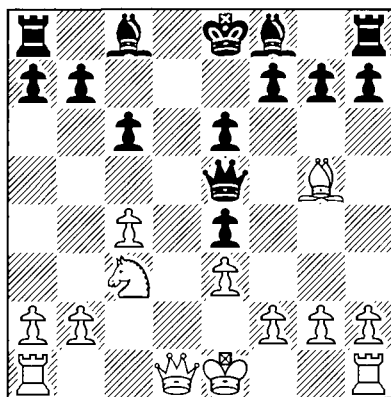


Diagram 6 (W)

But not that much trouble

Very strong, though White isn't doomed to lose a piece (yet) because, unlike after 7 Nd2 in the game above, his knight is still on f3 defending g5. Nevertheless, it is game over after 8 0-0? Nxe5 9 Nxe5 dxc4 and a piece goes, as this time it is the knight that is attacked on g5.

8 Bxe4 dxe4 9 Ne5!

The only move. Other knight moves drop the bishop.

9...Nxe5 10 dxe5 Qxe5?? (Diagram 6)

An interesting psychological turn. I had thought for a long time over my moves,

despite it only being a 30 minute game, whereas my opponent had up until now been moving instantly. My body language must have suggested confusion and I played 9 Ne5 in the style of a man clutching at straws. My opponent shrugged his shoulders and took the pawn on e5 without thinking...

11 Qd8 mate

So all's well that ends well. Instead 10...Bb4! gives Black the advantage, as he can castle and then attack the loose white pawns.

A killer at club level

It is not only because of traps that the Cambridge Springs works well. It is also difficult for White to appreciate the value of the two best moves at his disposal, namely 7 cxd5 and 7 Nd2.

It is all very well for Kramnik, but how many ordinary players would want to play 7 cxd5, when after 7...Nxd5 the c3-square is attacked by the black knight, and the pressure can be increased by ...Bb4. Not many! The other move, 7 Nd2, also feels rather unappealing. After all, how often is the knight retreated to d2 in the Queen's Gambit?

As you can see, the Cambridge Springs is very hard to meet for the unprepared club player. Chances are, he will stick that bishop on d3 and then you will be in!

Whilst bearing all this in mind, we should now look at the established theoretical moves 7 Nd2 and 7 cxd5.

White plays 7 Nd2

The main line: 7...Bb4 8 Qc2 0-0

With **7 Nd2 (Diagram 7)**, White breaks the pin on c3. It looks slow, but he hopes to reactivate the knight with Nb3 at some point, gaining time by hitting the black queen. Note that the b3-square isn't a backwoods: on the contrary, as Black is planning ...c6-c5 or ...e6-e5 to free his game, it is a base from which the knight can fight for the key centre squares d4 and c5.

Play normally continues:

7...Bb4

The natural response. Black develops with gain of time by hitting the knight. Alternatively, you might try 7...dxc4 and hope that White forgets his bishop is hanging on g5! This isn't such a bad idea anyway, as after 8 Bxf6 Nxf6 9 Nxc4 Qc7 10 Rc1 Be7 White can claim a space advantage, but Black is solidly entrenched and can point to the bishop pair.

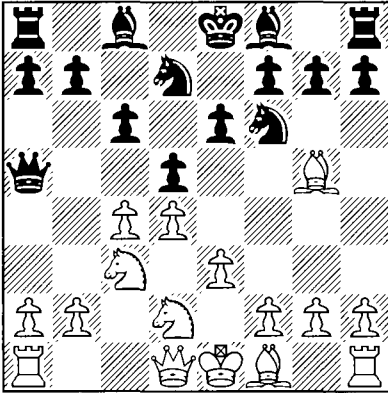


Diagram 7 (B)
White plays 7 Nd2

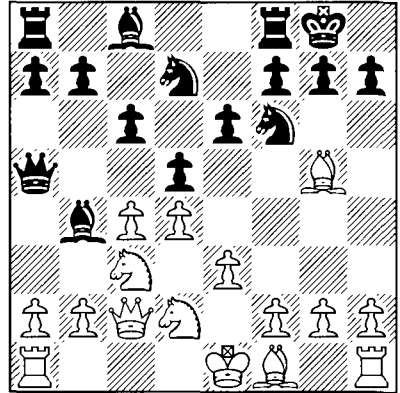


Diagram 8 (W)
The main line

8 Qc2

Here the white queen fights for the e4-square as well as defending c3.

Instead 8 Rc1 invites familiar trouble with 8...Ne4!, when 9 Ndx e4 dxe4 10 Bh4 Qxa2! wins a pawn.



TIP: Remember the trick ...Qxa2! exploiting the pinned knight in the Cambridge Springs.

8...0-0 (Diagram 8)

At this point, as so often, 9 Bd3 deserves a lot of question marks heaped upon it. Can you see why? If not, I suggest you take another look at the short game that began this chapter.

So White usually develops the bishop in modest fashion with 9 Be2. Nothing wrong with that: White doesn't need to prove anything as a sound space advantage speaks for itself.

The onus is rather on his opponent to find a way of equalizing.

Here Black has to make a big decision. His king is safely castled, there are no weaknesses in his pawn structure, and almost all his pieces are well placed. But note there is one black piece that is abysmal: the bishop on c8 has no move at all. And if the bishop doesn't at least get off its starting square, the rook on a8 is also going to remain entombed. Black can't afford to play the middlegame without the services of a rook and bishop. Therefore, even at the cost of endangering himself, Black needs to break open some lines in the centre as a prelude to getting the bishop out.

There are two main methods: 9...c5 and 9...e5. We shall examine them in the context of the game that follows.

Game 29

□ M.Carlsen ■ G.Kasparov

Reykjavik (rapid) 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 e3 Qa5 7 Nd2 Bb4 8 Qc2 0-0

The alternative 8...Ne4 is investigated below.

9 Be2 e5 (Diagram 9)

The alternative is 9...c5! which, on the face of it, seems a better try than Kasparov's move. For example: 10 Nb3 Qa4! (**Diagram 10**) (beginning an instructive manoeuvre: first of all the black queen exploits the pin on c3 in order to avoid being forced back to a passive square) 11 Bxf6 Nxf6 12 dxc5 dxc4 13 Bxc4 Qc6! (not 13...Bxc5?? 14 Nxa4; whereas now both c5 and g2 are hanging, so Black regains his pawn) 14 0-0 Bxc5 15 Nxc5 Qxc5 with balanced chances in L.Van Wely-E.Bacrot, Gothenburg 2005.

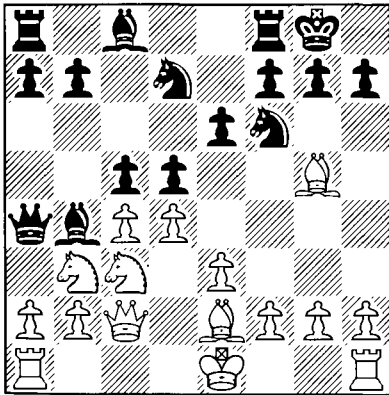


Diagram 9 (W)

An instructive queen manoeuvre

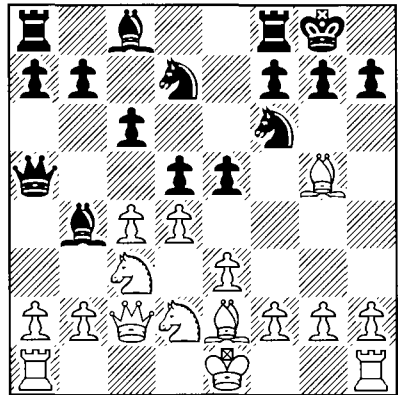


Diagram 10 (W)

Position after 9...e5

Or 10 0-0 cxd4 11 Nb3 Qb6 12 Na4 Qc7 13 Nxd4 dxc4 14 Bxc4 (the result of homework; instead 14 Qxc4 led to a quick draw between the same players: 14...Qxc4 15 Bxc4 Ne5 16 Bb5 Bd7 17 Bxf6 ½-½ in V.Ivanchuk-E.Bacrot, Saint Vincent 2005) 14...Bd6 15 Rac1!? Bxh2+ 16 Kh1 Bd6 17 Nb5 Qb8 and White had pressure for the pawn, but Black held on in V.Ivanchuk-E.Bacrot, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

So three games with 9...c5 and three draws for the top French GM. We may con-

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

clude that it is slightly uncomfortable for Black, but a perfectly reasonable way to handle the position.

10 0-0!

After 10 dxe5 Ne4!, attacking g5, Black will regain his pawn whilst avoiding any damage to his kingside, e.g. 11 Ndx4 dxe4 12 0-0 Bxc3 13 bxc3 Re8 14 Rfd1 Nxe5 15 Qxe4 Be6 16 Bh4 Qxc3 etc. in R.Vaganian-A.Yusupov, Yerevan 1982.

10...exd4

If now 11 exd4? dxc4 uncovers an attack on g5, when 12 Bxf6 Nxf6 13 Nxc4 Qd8 (or 13...Qg5!?) gives Black a fine position.

11 Nb3!

Justifying his seventh move. The knight is reactivated with gain of time and drives the black queen away from a5.

11...Qb6 12 exd4 dxc4 13 Bxc4 (Diagram 11)

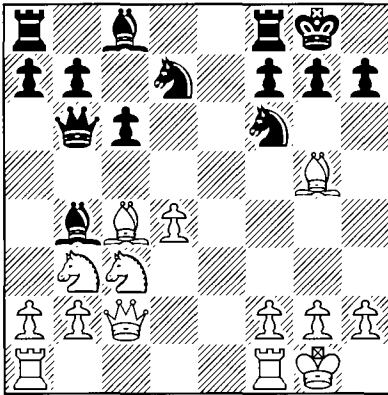


Diagram 11 (B)

Black is not quite equal

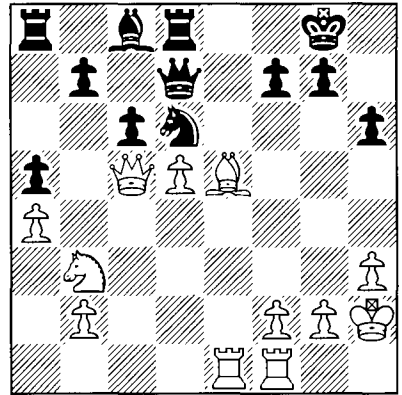


Diagram 12 (W)

Black struggles to draw

Here Black is almost, but not quite equal – whereas if you remove the bishop on c8 and the bishop on c4 from the board, he would be at least OK due to his superior pawn structure.

13...a5 14 a4 Qc7 15 Rae1

An open file for the rook, and it can't be challenged because the rook on a8 can't hop like a knight over the obstacle on c8.

15...h6 16 Bh4 Bd6 17 h3 Nb6

Now begins a kind of tactical ballet between the white and black pieces. It's a lively affair, but soon it becomes clear that one piece is refusing to join in the

dance: the black bishop on c8. The consequence is that, for all Kasparov's inventiveness, he can't avoid being forced into a bad endgame.

18 Bxf6 Nxc4 19 Ne4! Bh2+!

An ingenious means to get the knight on c4 back into the centre.

20 Kh1 Nd6! 21 Kxh2!

It turns out that walking into a discovered check is the way to bring the tactics to a finish.

21...Nxe4+ 22 Be5 Nd6 23 Qc5! Rd8 24 d5 Qd7 (Diagram 12)

Getting out of the pin(s) while keeping the knight guarded. However, it is a sorry state of affairs when the bishop on c8 doesn't have a single move, and White soon wins a pawn. Kasparov manages somehow to save himself by directing play into an opposite-coloured bishop endgame.

25 Nd4 Nf5 26 dxc6 bxc6 27 Nxc6 Re8 28 Rd1 Qe6 29 Rfe1 Bb7 30 Nd4 Nxd4 31 Qxd4 Qg6 32 Qg4 Qxg4 33 hxg4 Bc6 34 b3 f6 35 Bc3 Rxe1 36 Rxe1 Bd5 37 Rb1 Kf7 38 Kg3 Rb8 39 b4 axb4 40 Bxb4 Bc4 41 a5 Ba6 42 f3 Kg6 43 Kf4 h5 44 gxh5+ Kxh5 45 Rh1+ Kg6 46 Bc5 Rb2 47 Kg3 Ra2 48 Bb6 Kf7 49 Rc1 g5 50 Rc7+ Kg6 51 Rc6 Bf1 52 Bf2 ½-½

I think an older Magnus Carlsen might well have won this game.

An unusual line for Black

Kasparov's torment above wasn't a very good advertisement for 9...e5. Perhaps you might want to try 9...c5, or else investigate the following idea.

Game 30

□ C.Ekeberg ■ V.Taksrud

Oslo 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 e3 c6 6 Nf3 Qa5 7 Nd2 Bb4 8 Qc2 Ne4!?
(Diagram 13)

Anyway! Perhaps the theorists aren't very impressed with this move, but it does lead to active play for Black.

9 Ndxе4 dxe4 10 Bh4

Drat, he saw it!

10...0-0 11 Be2

Naturally, the e4-pawn is still immune as c3 would drop, but White plans to develop quietly and target the black centre later.

11...e5!

A standard freeing move, both here and in other variations of the Queen's Gambit

Declined. Black won't be able to function properly in the middlegame unless he finds a way to bring the bishop on c8 and the rook on a8 into the game.

12 0-0 f5 (Diagram 14)

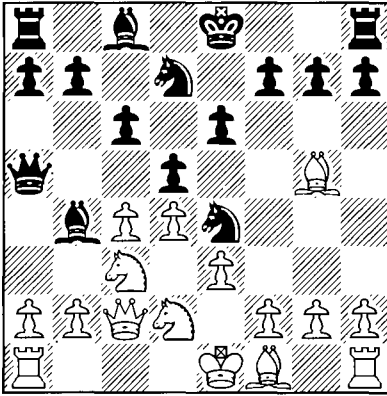


Diagram 13 (W)

Black plays ...Ne4 anyway!

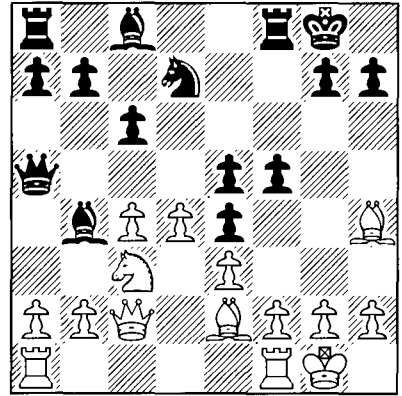


Diagram 14 (W)

Dynamic black pawns

Now Black has a clump of pawns in the centre that he can hope to push in the future.

13 Nb1?

A misguided attempt to trap the bishop on b4 with 14 c5. It was better to try to try 13 c5 immediately, when after 13...exd4 14 exd4 Bxc3 (if 14...Nf6 15 Nb1! and this time the black bishop really is in big trouble due to 16 a3 etc.) 15 bxc3 Nf6 White has the two bishops, but the e4- and f5-pawns maintain Black's dynamism.

13...Bd6 14 c5 Bb8

All that White has achieved with his knight retreat is to drive the black bishop to a better diagonal, where it supports e5 and can help the queen attack the h2-square.

15 Nd2 exd4 16 exd4 Nf6 17 f3

This turns out badly, but it's understandable that White would want to try to break up the impressive black pawns.

17...Qc7! 18 Bc4+ Kh8 19 Bg3

If 19 g3 e3 20 Nb3 f4 looks excellent for Black.

19...f4 20 Bh4 e3 (Diagram 15)

The oppressive protected passed pawn will prevent White from organising counterplay to offset the coming attack on his kingside.

21 Bxf6?

This helps Black bring his rook into the attack, but 21 Nb3 Nd5 is also very unpleasant for White.

21...Rxf6 22 Ne4 Bf5

At last the light-squared bishop enters the game.

23 Bd3 Rg6 24 Kh1 Qe7 25 Nc3 Bxd3 26 Qxd3 Bc7 27 Rfd1 Rf8 (Diagram 16)

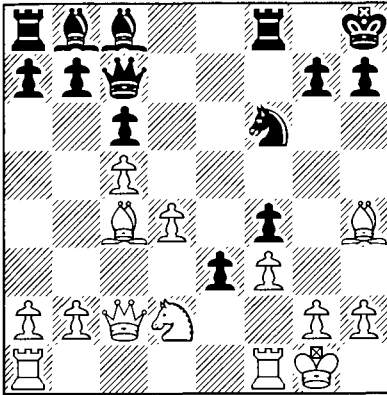


Diagram 15 (W)

Black will attack the king

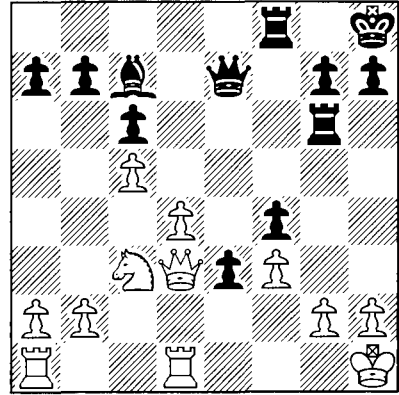


Diagram 16 (W)

Black's second rook joins in

The arrival of the second rook on the kingside quickly makes the attack irresistible.

28 Qc2 Rh6 29 h3 Bd8 30 b4 Qe6 31 Kh2 Bh4 32 Ne4 Rf5 33 Kg1 Rg6 34 Kf1 Rh5 35 a4 Be7 36 Qc3 Rxc2! 0-1

It is mate in one after 37 Kxc2 Qxh3+.

White plays 7 cxd5

It is time to look at White's other main possibility, which is 7 cxd5. Black should then recapture with:

7...Nxd5! (Diagram 17)

You will have noticed that Black often plays the move ...Nd5 or ...Ne4 in the Queen's Gambit, in order to facilitate exchanges that free his game. Here it is especially attractive as White is forced to attend to the threat to c3.

8 Qd2

More or less forced, since the c3-point must be guarded. Here Black can choose between 8...N7b6 and 8...Bb4.

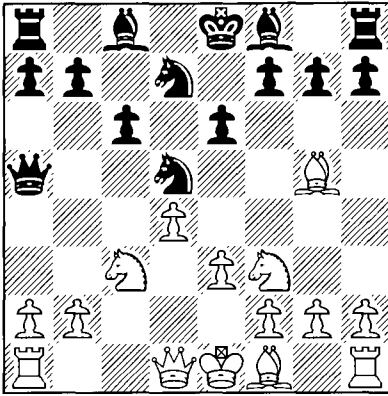


Diagram 17 (W)

Position after 7...Nxd5!

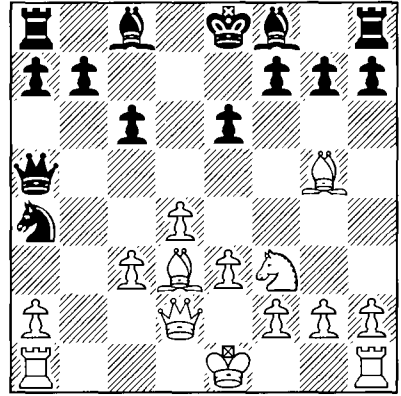


Diagram 18 (W)

An audacious pawn grab

Feeling lucky? A risky queenside adventure with 8...N7b6

The move 8...N7b6 plans a highly audacious pawn grab after the natural 9 Bd3, with 9...Nxc3 10 bxc3 (or 10 0-0!? Nba4!?) 10...Na4 (**Diagram 18**).

Now, rather surprisingly, White has no good way to save his c3-pawn, as 11 c4?? Bb4 doesn't add up to much, while after 11 Rc1 the snatch 11...Nxc3! occurs anyway. If then 12 Rxc3? Bb4 bags the rook. Still, it's by no means the end of the story: after 12 0-0 Bb4 (necessary to support the knight and break the pin on the queen) 13 Qb2 Nd5 14 Rc4! Be7 15 Bxe7 Nxe7 16 d5! (a very nice touch, uncovering an attack on g7) 16...0-0 17 Rg4 White had an enduring initiative in V.Loginov-A.Panchenko, USSR 1986.

Returning to the position after 10...Na4, another line is 11 0-0 Qxc3 12 Qe2 Qb2 13 Bc2 Qb5! (extricating the queen and defending the knight) 14 Qd1 Nc3 15 Qd2 Bb4 16 Bd3 Qa4 17 a3 Ba5 18 Qb2 f6 19 Bh4 Nd5 20 Rfc1, again with a lasting initiative for White in E.Magerramov-R.Scherbakov, Cheliabinsk 1991.

There is no denying that Black is taking his life in his hands playing like this. But on the other hand, will your opponent play with enough energy to punish you, or will a 'normal' position soon arise in which you are just a pawn up? Not everyone can play as well as the Grandmasters in the examples above – and even if they could, the outcome is far from clear.

Black accepts a pawn offer after 8...Bb4

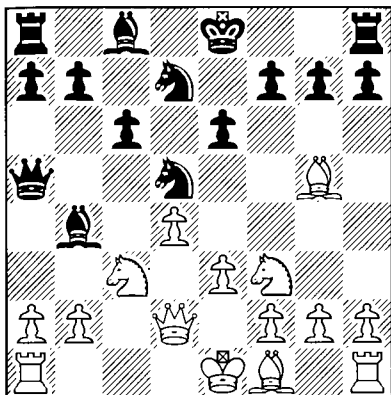


Diagram 19 (W)

Black plays 8...Bb4

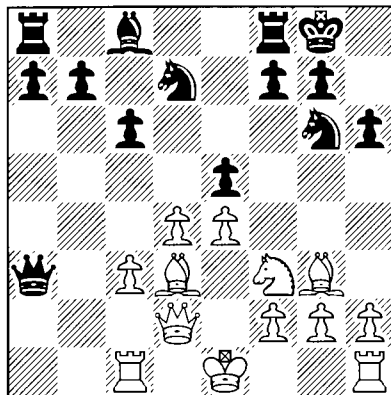


Diagram 20 (W)

Standing firm in the centre

Instead of 8...N7b6, Black can develop naturally with **8...Bb4 (Diagram 19)**. Then, as we shall see, White can offer a pawn, rather than have it 'stolen' from him as above.

Game 31

□ V.Kramnik ■ L.Bruzon

Turin Olympiad 2006

1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 Nf6 3 c4 c6 4 Nc3 e6 5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 e3 Qa5

By an unusual move order we have reached the Cambridge Springs.

7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qd2 Bb4 9 Rc1 h6 10 Bh4 0-0 11 a3!?

If White wants to shake off the pressure of the black pieces he is probably compelled to offer a pawn at some point. For if 11 Bd3 Black can advance in the centre with 11...e5!? (or 11...Re8!? intending 12...e5), seeing that 12 dxe5? Nxc3 13 bxc3 Ba3 followed by 14...Nxe5 regains the pawn with advantage to him.

11...Bxc3 12 bxc3 Qxa3 13 e4 Ne7 14 Bd3 Ng6 15 Bg3 e5! (Diagram 20)

Stopping White clamping down on more space with 16 e5.

Kramnik has a strong centre and active pieces for the pawn. Meanwhile Black has the perennial problem of the bad bishop on c8 that haunts him in the Cambridge Springs. On the other hand, Black is a sound pawn up, he is well entrenched in the centre and there are no immediate threats to his king.

16 0-0

16 h4 was another way to attack, but Black looks solid after 16...exd4 17 cxd4 Re8 18 h5 Ngf8, as in A.Khalifman-M.Gurevich, Lanzarote 2003.

16...Re8 17 Rfe1 Qa5 18 Qb2 Qd8 19 Bb1 a5 20 Rcd1 a4

It's hard to see how Black will ever manage to queen this pawn and win the game. On the other hand, there is no good reason for him to lose either.

21 Ba2 Qe7 22 Qc1 Ra5 23 Qd2 exd4??

Black should just have played a waiting move.

24 Nxd4! (Diagram 21)

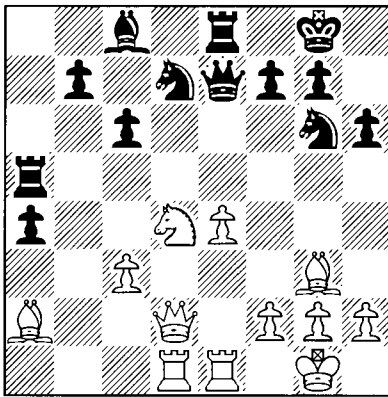


Diagram 21 (B)

White is now very active

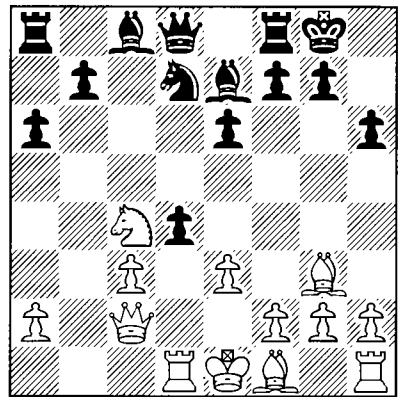


Diagram 22 (W)

Capablanca-Maróczy, Carlsbad 1929

Of course! The dynamism generated by the white pieces is far more significant than keeping a pretty pawn structure with 24 cxd4. Now Black has no good answer to the threat of 25 Nf5 with ideas of 26 Nd6 hitting c8, e8 and f7.

I am strongly reminded of a game between Capablanca and Maróczy at Carlsbad 1929. This began 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nc3 Nbd7 7 Rc1 c6 8 Qc2 h6 9 Bh4 a6 10 cxd5 Nxd5 11 Bg3 Qa5 12 Nd2 Nxc3 13 bxc3 c5 14 Nc4 Qd8 15 Rd1 cxd4 (**Diagram 22**)

Here, rather than the 'obvious' recapture with 16 cxd4, Capa played 16 Rxd4!, after which the black pieces were unable to escape their positional straitjacket: 16...Bc5 17 Rd2 Qe7 18 Be2 b6 19 Nd6 Nf6 20 0-0 Ra7 21 Bf3 Bd7 22 Rfd1 e5 23 Bh4! (with Black paralysed, it is time to provoke weaknesses in his kingside pawn cover) 23...g5 24 Bg3 Kg7 25 Be2 b5 26 h4! Rc7 27 hxg5 hxg5 28 Nf5+ Bxf5 29 Qxf5 and Black resigned just in time before his pawns started falling off.

24...Qc5

Allowing a winning combination, but in view of the threat of 25 Nf5, it's difficult to suggest any reasonable move.

25 Bc7!

An important strengthening of the white attack, as after 25 Bxf7+ Kxf7 26 Qa2+ Kf8 27 Ne6+ Rxe6 28 Qxe6 Black has 28...Nge5, keeping the white bishop out of d6.

25...Ra8 26 Bxf7+! (Diagram 23)

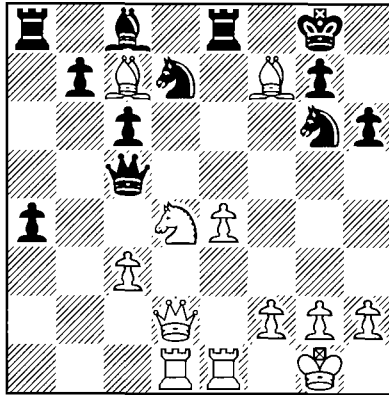


Diagram 23 (B)
A winning sacrifice

Now this sacrifice is lethal.

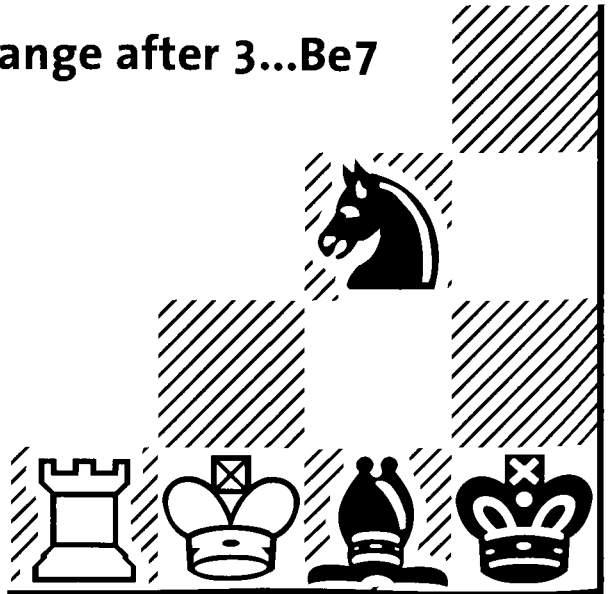
26...Kxf7 27 Qa2+ Kf8 28 Ne6+ Rxe6 29 Qxe6 Ne7 30 Re3 Ke8 31 Rf3 Qh5 32 Bd6 1-0

It is all over, since if 32...Qg5 33 Rf7 with a massacre on e7.

Chapter Six

The Exchange Variation

- Introduction
- The Minority Attack
- White builds up in the centre
- White castles queenside
- The Exchange after 3...Be7



Introduction

White can play the c4xd5 capture that defines the Exchange Variation at various moments in the opening and against all sorts of Black set-ups. In fact there isn't any chapter in this book which doesn't contain some reference to White transposing into an Exchange Variation pawn centre. However, a characteristic sequence is:

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5

With the familiar threat of 6 Bxf6; when Black must submit to 6...gxf6 or else lose a pawn. So Black defends d5.

5...c6 6 Qc2!

Not letting Black develop his bishop to the excellent f5 post.

6...Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 Nbd7 (Diagram 1)

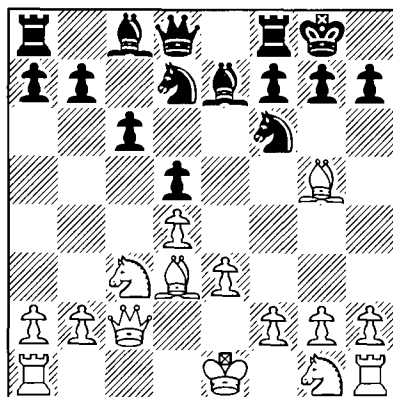


Diagram 1 (W)

The Exchange Variation

White's strategic ideas

In the diagram position, White still has all four of his main strategic plans available:

- 1) Play Nf3, 0-0 and then start a Minority Attack with Rab1 and b4-b5.
- 2) Play Nge2, 0-0 and then build up in the centre with f2-f3 and e3-e4.
- 3) Play Nf3 and 0-0-0 and launch a pawn storm against the black king.
- 4) Play Nge2, 0-0-0 and launch a pawn storm against the black king.

In the chapter we shall work through these plans systematically, starting with the Minority Attack. In the final section we shall examine the Exchange Variation after 3...Be7.



NOTE: It should be repeated that the Exchange Variation comes in all shapes and sizes. The important thing is to remember the basic ideas, and then see how you can best fit them into whatever version of the Exchange you meet in a given game.

Queen's Bishop friendly?

After the exchange $c4xd5 \dots e6xd5$, you would imagine that the problems of the bishop are solved. After all, Black strives so hard in other variations to open a diagonal for the bishop with $\dots b7-b6$ or $\dots e6-e5$, and here it is handed to him on a plate! Nevertheless, although an early $\dots Bf5$ looks attractive for Black, he has to be careful. If, for example, 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 Be7 6 e3 0-0 7 Nf3 the move 7...Bf5 is very natural, but it gets hit by 8 Bxf6 Bxf6 9 Qb3 (**Diagram 2**), when b7 and d5 can't both be defended.

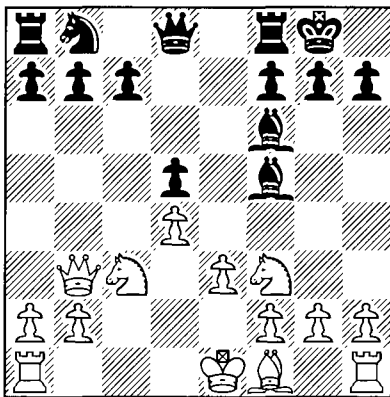


Diagram 2 (B)

Watch out for Qb3 after $\dots Bf5$



WARNING: Always watch out for Qb3 if you are planning $\dots Bf5$ in this type of centre.

The above trap explains why 5...c6 was given in the above sequence of moves, aiming to play a safe 6...Bf5, and also why White was keen to stop it with 6 Qc2! In fact, if White is quick to seize the f5-square with Bd3 or Qc2, and maybe throws

in h2-h3 to guard g4 as well, Black's light-squared bishop can end up sitting rather forlornly on e6 with nothing to attack.

Nevertheless, in order to progress with his plans, White will need to make loosening pawn advances somewhere on the board; and then the black bishop might have the chance to ambush him.

The name of the opening

In many defences, the word 'Exchange' suggests something boring or drawish: for example, the Slav Exchange and the French Exchange variations. However, in those openings, the pawn exchange on d5 leads to a symmetrical position: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5 cxd5 and 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 respectively. Then White's advantage is nothing more than that of moving first: an intangible that can suddenly vanish if there is no imbalance in the pawn structure.

The same cannot be said about the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation. By capturing on d5, White is creating a permanently asymmetrical pawn structure. You may have noticed that Black no longer has the option of conceding the centre with ...d5xc4 in conjunction with the freeing ...e6-e5 or ...b7-b6, ...Bb7 and ...c7-c5 which is a mainstay of many Queen's Gambit Declined defences. In the Exchange Variation, the black d5-pawn is set in stone: it is one of the paradoxes of chess strategy that this is more pleasing to White than Black.

Black's strategy

So what exactly is Black's strategy? He can't try to carry out the ...e6-e5 advance in the Exchange, for the simple reason that he doesn't have an e-pawn! The alternative advance ...c7-c5 is still possible, but doesn't look as attractive as in other defences, since after d4xc5 Black will have an IQP.

In *Starting Out with 1 d4*, John Cox makes the following comment about the Exchange pawn structure:

'White's advantage is basically this: he has two realistic pawn breaks to Black's none. He might play b4-b5xc6, the famous minority attack, to create a weak pawn on c6, or he might play e4, perhaps without, but more likely with f3 to create a mobile pawn duo on d4 and e4.'

True, but it must be added that these pawn breaks can also ruin White's position if they are handled incorrectly. As will be seen, even world class players often shy away from the b4-b5 advance; and while a plan of f2-f3 and e3-e4 can work brilliantly, it is also fraught with danger if White loses control. Black needs to be patient and keep his pieces well organized, so that when the strategical niceties come to an end and the real tactical fighting begins, he has the chance to come out on top.

So we might say, not entirely jokingly, that White is in trouble as has two ways to

destroy his position, Black has none!

I can't resist quoting what Chernev said about Emanuel Lasker in one of his books:

'If there is one strategical concept that is the secret of much of Lasker's success, it is his faith in the power of centralization... Lasker never embarks on quixotic adventures, no matter how strong the temptation, but centralizes his pieces instead (where their strength for attack and defence is at a maximum) and awaits developments.'

Whilst this sounds rather simplistic, it does capture the ideal philosophical approach needed by Black. He should centralize his pieces, ease his game with some judicious exchanges, and then await the events of the middlegame from a firm foundation.

The Minority Attack

Case Study One: Early History

In the Queen's Gambit Declined, the Minority Attack refers specifically to White's b4-b5 advance to besiege the c6-pawn. Here is one of the very first examples in the history of chess.

Game 32

□ **W.Steinitz** ■ **F.Lee**

London 1899

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Bxf6 Bxf6 7 cxd5 exd5 8 Qb3 c6 9 Bd3 Re8 10 Nge2 Nd7 11 Qc2 Nf8 12 0-0 g6 (Diagram 3)

Here Wilhelm Steinitz utilized his queenside pawns to create a weakness on c6:

13 b4 a6 14 a4

The support of the second white pawn is vital to the attack.

14...Be7 15 b5 axb5 16 axb5 Rxa1 17 Rxa1 f5?!

This move makes a bad impression to modern eyes. If Black wanted to counterattack on the kingside, he should first be using his pieces, not his pawns. Perhaps the calm 17...Bd6 was best. If instead 17...c5 18 dxc5 Bxc5 19 Rd1 gives White annoying pressure on the IQP.

18 Ra8 Nd7 19 Na4 Nb6 20 Nxb6 Qxb6 21 Nc3 Bd7 22 Qa2 Rxa8 23 Qxa8+ Bd8 24 Na4 Qc7 (Diagram 4) 25 b6

Alas, Steinitz was old and tired and at the end of his wonderful career when this game was played. Here 25 Nc5 wins the b7-pawn with a crushing advantage, as

25...cxb5? 26 Nxb7 and 25...Bc8? 26 b6! both cost Black a bishop.

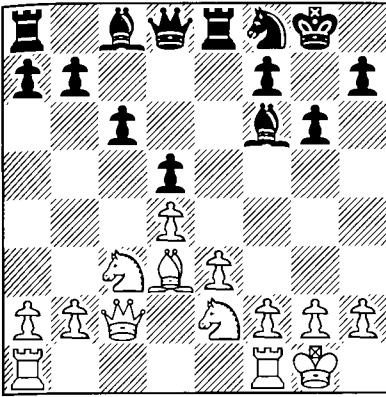


Diagram 3 (W)

White plays b4, a4, b5

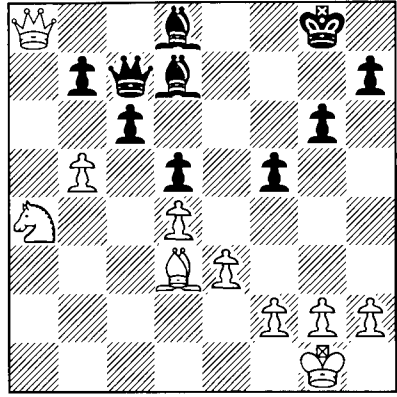


Diagram 4 (W)

White can win a pawn

25...Qc8 26 Qa7 f4!

Black manages to generate just enough counterplay to save himself.

27 Nc5 fxe3 28 Nxb7 exf2+ 29 Kf1 Bf5! 30 Bxf5 Qxf5 31 Nxd8 Qd3+

It turns out to be perpetual check.

32 Kxf2 Qd2+ 33 Kf3 Qd3+ 34 Kg4 Qf5+ 35 Kg3 Qd3+ 36 Kh4 Qxd4+ 37 g4 Qf6+ 38 Kg3 Qe5+ ½-½

Case Study Two: The Bronstein rule

Game 33

□ V.Smyslov ■ Y.Averbakh

Zürich Candidates Tournament 1953

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 Nc3 d5 4 d4 Bb4 5 cxd5 exd5 6 Bg5 h6 7 Bxf6 Qxf6 8 Qb3 Qd6 9 a3 Bxc3+ 10 Qxc3 0-0 11 Rc1 c6 12 e3 Bf5 13 Be2 Nd7 14 0-0 a5 (Diagram 5)

Any pawn advance on the wing where your opponent is attacking has been judged very carefully. By putting up a temporary barrier, you may only be delaying the inevitable onslaught for a couple of moves; after which it breaks through with even greater force due to the loosening effect of the failed preventive move.

Here, however, Black's pawn move is very sensible. Averbakh has seen that after 15 b4 axb4 16 axb4 the open file is a useful asset for Black: he could even play 16...Ra2! immediately.

Another point of the move is that White would like to stick his knight on c5 (the reason why becomes clear over the next few moves); but if 15 Nd2, intending 16 Nb3 and 17 Nc5, then 15...a4! keeps the knight out of b3 and scotches the plan.

Nevertheless, there is nothing free in this world. The pawn on a5 is a slight weakness which requires the rook on a8 to stand sentry duty.

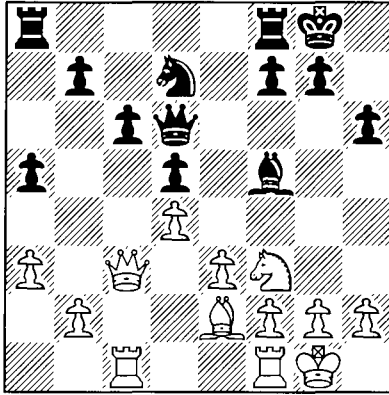


Diagram 5 (B)

Think before playing ...a5

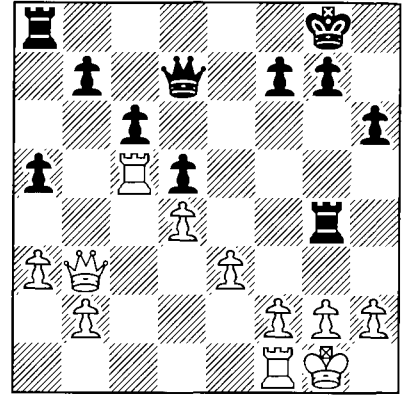


Diagram 6 (W)

Black attacks with the pieces

15 Ne1

Smyslov tries to get the knight to c5 by a different route.

15...Nf6

Here 15...a4, whose merits are in any case debatable, is unnecessary as the b2-b4 advance isn't a worry. Black can use the tempo more profitably on the kingside.

16 Nd3

White threatens 17 Nc5 when Black has to defend b7 with one of his heavy pieces, or else play 17...b6, when the c6-pawn is seriously weakened.

16...Bxd3!

An astute decision. The knight was of more valuable to White's strategic plan than anything the bishop could do for Black.

17 Qxd3 Rfe8 18 Bf3 Ne4 19 Bxe4 Rxe4 20 Qb3 Qd7 21 Rc5 Rg4! (Diagram 6)

A noteworthy rook manoeuvre. Already there is the threat of 22...Rxc2+ 23 Kxc2 Qg4+ 24 Kh1 Qf3+ forcing a draw by perpetual check.

David Bronstein makes a very perceptive comment here in his book on the 1953 Candidates Tournament:

'Usually during the minority attack White's king is left either completely devoid

of piece protection or else covered by just one minor piece. It's not easy, though, to break through to the king by means of a pawn storm, so the most popular method is the direct frontal assault, especially when g2 and h2 provide such excellent targets. Should White have to advance his g-pawn or h-pawn, only then should Black bring in his pawns.'



TIP: You will save or win many games as Black if you remember the 'Bronstein rule' to counterattack with the pieces first against the white kingside!

22 h3 Rg6 23 Kh1 a4 24 Qb4 Rf6 25 Kg1 ½-½

After 25 Ra5 Black could play simply 25...Rxa5 26 Qxa5 b5, when it is difficult to see how White can ever hope to exert any meaningful pressure on the c6-pawn, which is soundly defended by both black pieces.

Alternatively, Black can play 25...Re8!? threatening 26...Rxe3. The white kingside is looking rather bare of defenders; for example, if 26 Qc3 Black can even speculate with 26...Rf3, planning a sacrifice on f3, when if 27 gxh3? Qxh3+ 28 Kg1 Re6 29 Ra8+ Kh7 30 Qd3+ f5! and the threat of 31...Rg6 mate is unstoppable.

Case Study Three: Black is OK!

There are countless games where Black defends the backward pawn on c6 with a minimum of discomfort and achieves adequate counterplay on the kingside, but these are regarded as too boring to appear in books. Instead the chess teacher looks through his archives for a game where the Minority Attack comes up trumps after some feeble play by Black, and then praises it as a well nigh irresistible formula for beating the Queen's Gambit Declined!

The following game is of the sort that never receives much attention in books because it is, quite frankly, boring. Why cut down trees to give a dour 53 move draw by Karpov, when the world is awash with masterpieces of positional pressure by the great man?

Ah, but when you close this book, put on your lucky jumper and head off to do battle at your next tournament or match, you surely want to know that you will be OK facing the Minority Attack. And what can be more reassuring than to see Karpov, still in his prime, unable to break down Black's resistance? After all, if he can't prove White is better in the Minority Attack, who can?

Game 34

□ **A.Karpov** ■ **J.Ehlvest**

Vienna 1996

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 0-0 6 e3 Nbd7 7 cxd5 exd5 8 Bd3 c6 9 Qc2

Re8 10 0-0 Nf8 (Diagram 7)

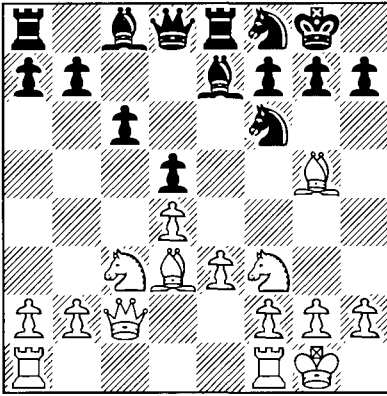


Diagram 7 (W)

A standard position

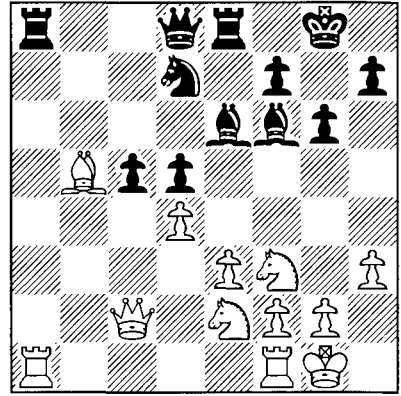


Diagram 8 (B)

Knights are better than bishops

A standard position has been reached.

11 h3

If instead 11 Rae1, then 11...Ne4! prevents any e3-e4 breakout. The game move prevents Black playing ...Bg4 or perhaps even 11...Ng4!? to free his game by exchanging bishops (it is only possible now that 10...Nf8 has defended h7 again).

Here is a lovely regrouping of the black pieces after 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 b4 Bg4 13 Nd2 Be7! (the bishop heads for the d6-square where it can attack h2) 14 Rab1 Bd6 15 Bf5 Bh5! (another instructive move; Black wants to maintain his counterplay and so avoids the exchange of bishops, even though it is his supposedly 'bad' bishop) 16 Rfc1 g6 17 Bd3 Qg5 18 Ne2 Nd7 with fully sufficient activity for Black in J.Timman-G.Kasparov, London 1984.

11...g6!?

A common theme. Black prepares 12...Ne6 to attack the bishop on g5 without allowing Bxf6 and Bxh7+ in reply. After 13 Bh6, Black could utilize the g7-square with ...Ng7 and ...Bf5 to exchange off his light-squared bishop which has little scope here. Also interesting is 12...Nh5!?, intending ...Ng7 (albeit with the other knight) and ...Bf5 again.

12 Bxf6

Karpov pre-emptively Black's plan and facilitates his next move by deflecting the black bishop from the defence of b4.

12...Bxf6 13 b4 a6

So that after White advances b4-b5, Black can exchange off with ...a6xb5, leaving him with one less pawn to worry about on the queenside.

14 a4 Be6 15 b5 axb5 16 axb5 Nd7

Black methodically brings his minor pieces into action.

17 bxc6 bxc6

18 Rxa8 Qxa8 19 Ne2 c5!? 20 dxc5 Rc8 21 Ned4 Nxc5 is not much different to the game.

18 Ne2 c5

Getting rid of the weakness on c6.

19 Bb5! (Diagram 8)

With pawns only on one side of the board, it is better to have knights than bishops, as the knight's ability to operate on squares of both colours is still an asset, whereas the power of a bishop to act at long range has diminished in value.

Karpov is also giving his opponent the opportunity to make a positional mistake.

19...Bf5

You might think that with 19...c4? Black acquires a strong protected passed pawn, whilst also solving the problem of his weak queenside. Far from it: after 20 Nc3! the c4-pawn is going nowhere, and Black is facing not only 21 Bc6, when holding onto the d5-pawn is a severe headache, but also a well-timed e3-e4, undermining the defence of the c4-pawn. In effect, after 19...c4 Black would have two weak pawns, not one! Eh!vest therefore keeps the chance to exchange on d4.

20 Qd2 Qc7 21 Rxa8 Rxa8 22 Bxd7 Bxd7 23 Nf4 Be6 24 dxc5 Qxc5 25 Rd1 Ra1

As a general rule, the more pieces that are exchanged, the greater the chance Black has of escaping from the pressure. Certainly Black does well to avoid the passive 25...Rd8, e.g. 26 Nd4 Bxd4? (an example of a bad exchange; instead 26...Qd6 is still perfectly safe for Black) 27 Qxd4 Qxd4 28 Rxd4 and Black, who faces the threat of 29 e4, will suffer a long time.

27 Qa2 Bf6 28 Qa8+ Kg7 29 Qb7

With the not entirely subtle threat of 30 Nxe6+.

29...Qd6 30 h4! (Diagram 9)

Karpov never, ever gives up. If he sees the slightest way to set his opponent problems, he will carry on trying to win. Here the d5-pawn is soundly defended, so the only chance is to probe for weaknesses on the kingside.

30...h6!

After 30...h6? we see that there was more to 29 Qb7 than setting a crude trap, as 31 Ng5! threatens 32 Ngxe6+ winning a piece. The bishop dare not move from e6 because f7 drops, so 31...Bxg5 32 hxg5 is forced, after which Black has lost all the dark squares; even 32...d4 fails to 33 Qb2, winning the pawn.

31 g3

31 h5? g5 achieves less than nothing as the white knight is driven back and ...Bg4, picking up h5, becomes feasible.

31...Bg4 32 Nh2 Be6 33 Nf3 Bg4 34 Nd4 Bxd4

There is no real choice as otherwise d5 can't be defended. Still, compared to the exchange 31...Bxg5 given in the note to 30...h6 above, this is paradise for Black: the resulting white pawn on d4 is not only a possible target, it also denies the white queen the d4 post, from where she could attack d5 and exert pressure along the dark square diagonal a1-h8.

35 exd4 Be6 36 Kg2 g5

Driving the white knight away and so forcing Karpov to clarify matters.

37 hxg5 hxg5 38 Nd3 Qd7 39 Qxd7 Bxd7 (Diagram 10)

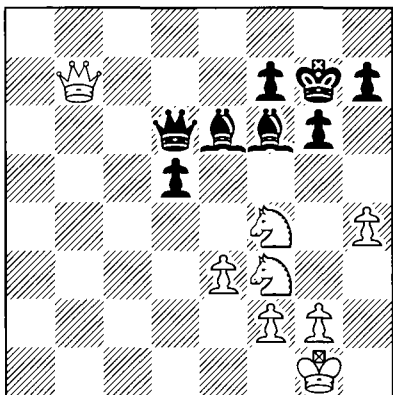


Diagram 9 (B)

Karpov keeps on probing

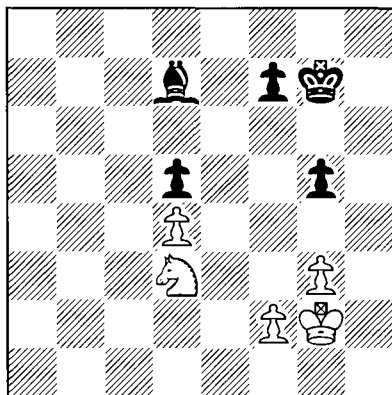


Diagram 10 (W)

But Black makes his draw

White still holds a symbolic advantage, as the black bishop is forced to defend the d5-pawn, but with so few pawns left on the board and no other weakness in the black position, this can hardly be enough to win.

**40 Kf3 Kf6 41 Nb4 Be6 42 Nc2 Ke7 43 Ke3 Kd6 44 Nb4 Kc7 45 f4 gxf4+ 46 Kxf4 f6!
47 Ke3 Kd6 48 Nd3 Bf5 49 Nf4 Be4 50 Kd2 Ke7 51 Ke3 Kd6 52 Ke2 Kd7 53 Kd2 Ke7
1/2-1/2**

Study this game carefully and take heart from the fact that you will never face as deadly an 'inquisition' when you play against the Minority Attack.

Case Study Four: Black is more than OK!

When I first saw the following game, I marvelled at how Kasparov could outplay an opponent from such a drawn-looking position. Actually, Portisch made some highly instructive positional mistakes that make the game of enormous value in terms of understanding the Queen's Gambit.

Game 35

□ L.Portisch ■ G.Kasparov

Skelleftea 1989

1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Nc3 c6 6 Qc2

Naturally White jumps at the chance to stop 6...Bf5.

6...Na6!? (Diagram 11)

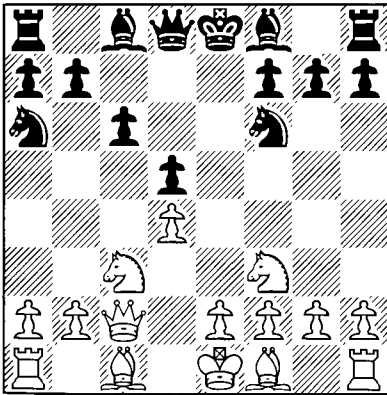


Diagram 11 (W)

The knight goes another way

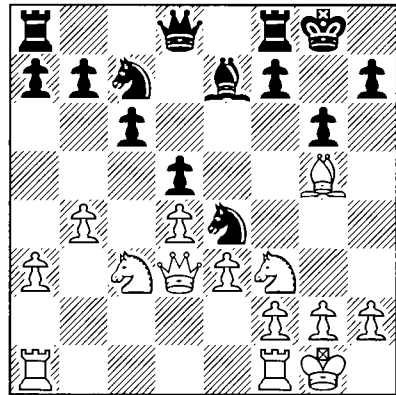


Diagram 12 (W)

White has been careless

Kasparov will demonstrate the knight is well placed on c7. Besides, on d7 it would interfere with his plan of preparing ...Bf5.

7 a3

Ruling out any disruptive 7...Nb4 move. This isn't just a defensive move as it also prepares b2-b4.

7...Nc7 8 Bg5 g6

We have already seen this move in the Ehlvest game. Here Kasparov is more successful in achieving ...Bf5.

9 e3 Bf5 10 Bd3 Bxd3 11 Qxd3 Be7 12 0-0 0-0 13 b4?

The obvious move, but in fact it is a significant mistake that loses the advantage. White should have played 13 Bxf6! Bxf6 14 b4, when the black knight that interferes with his minority attack would have been removed from the board.

13...Ne4! (Diagram 12)

How could the Hungarian Lajos Portisch, one of the most brilliant strategists in the history of chess, allow Black to play this freeing move? Surely he must have felt in his blood that the black knight on f6 had to be eliminated before it reached e4?

Well, the truth of the matter is that tactical blunders often masquerade as positional mistakes. Of course Portisch knew he had to eliminate the black knight, but he didn't realize that he had to do it at once as, according to his earlier calculations, 13...Ne4 was a mistake. He thought that 14 Bh6 would be a strong reply, when 14...Re8 15 Nxe4 dxe4 16 Qxe4 Bxb4 17 Qd3 would give White a pleasant advantage due to his extra centre pawn. Alas, only when the knight landed on e4 did Portisch realize his error: after 15 Nxe4?? dxe4 16 Qxe4 Black can win a piece with 16...Bf8! 17 Qf4 Ne6, as the queen can no longer defend h6.

As Réti remarked, a knowledge of tactics is the foundation of positional play. Even in the most quiet of games between Grandmasters, decisions are made for specific tactical reasons that usually remain hidden from view. That is why young players, with fresh minds that can see subtle tactical nuances, often outwit older players with thirty years of strategic knowledge behind them.

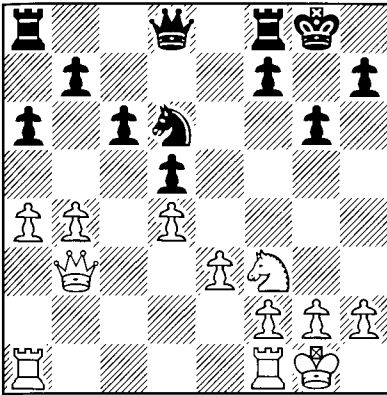
14 Bf4 Nxc3 15 Qxc3?

Here, however, we can be more critical of Portisch. Instead of this 'automatic' recapture, he should have taken the final chance to eliminate a knight with his bishop; i.e. 15 Bxc7! Qxc7 16 Qxc3, when White's advantage has dissipated, but he is still safe.

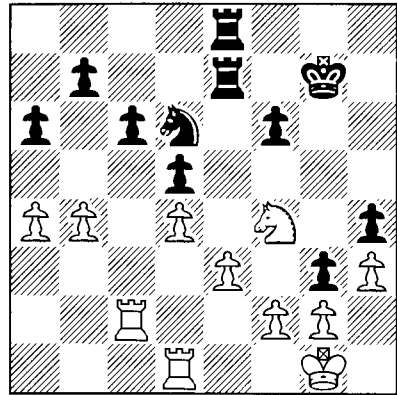
15...Bd6 16 Bxd6 Nb5 17 Qb3 Nxd6 18 a4 a6! (Diagram 13)

The b5-square is an impenetrable barrier, which means the end of White's activity. Now Kasparov slowly prepares a Minority Attack of his own: his three kingside pawns will eventually ram into the four white kingside pawns and force a structural weakness. It's a long and laborious process, which must have been very frustrating for Portisch. Here are the moves:

19 Ne5 Re8 20 Rfe1 Qg5 21 h3 Kg7 22 Qc2 Re6 23 Rac1 Rae8 24 Qb1 Qh5 25 Qb3 f6 26 Nd3 g5 27 Qd1 Qg6 28 Qc2 R6e7 29 Red1 h5 30 Qb1 h4 31 Qc2 g4 32 Nf4 Qxc2 33 Rxc2 g3 (Diagram 14) 34 Rd3 Kh6 35 Kf1 Kg5 36 Ne2 Nc4 37 Rcc3 Nb2 38 Rd2 Nxa4 39 Rb3 Nb6 40 Ng1 Nc4 41 Nf3+ Kh5 42 Rdd3 a5 43 bxa5 Ra8 44 Rd1 Rxa5 45 Re1 b5 46 Re2 Ra1+ 47 Re1 Rea7 48 fxc3 Rxe1+ 49 Kxe1 Ra1+ 50 Ke2 hxg3 51 Ne1 Ra2+ 52 Kd1 Rd2+ 53 Kc1 Re2 54 Kd1 Rxe3 55 Rxe3 Nxe3+ 56 Ke2 Nf5 57 Nc2 Nh4 58 Nb4 Nxc2 59 Kf3 Nh4+ 60 Kxc3 Nf5+ 61 Kf4 Nxd4 62 Ke3 Nf5+ 0-1

**Diagram 13 (W)**

Black controls the b5-square

**Diagram 14 (W)**

Undermining the white kingside

After 63 Kf4 Ne7 three passed pawns down against the World Champion would be a bit much.

Case Study Five: Feeble play will be punished

Of course, it shouldn't be assumed from the optimistic tone of the coverage so far that Black has nothing to fear from the b4-b5 advance – if it were really toothless then Karpov and other world class players would have given it up years ago. The key factor, as always, is how well the players perform relative to each other during the game.

In the next example, Kramnik is allowed to combine the Minority Attack with a second pawn advance in the centre.

Game 36

□ V.Kramnik ■ J.Timman

Belgrade 1995

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 d5 4 d4 Nbd7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 Bg5 c6 7 e3 Be7 8 Bd3 Nh5

Preferable is 8...0-0 etc., as in the games above. The plan of an early exchange of bishops seems to work better when White has played Nge2, because then the Minority Attack isn't really an issue.

9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 0-0 0-0

Instead 10...Nhf6 first would rule out the trick next move, as 11 Qb1 is senseless

after 11...a5.

11 Qb1!

A clever idea. Rather than prepare the Minority Attack with the standard 11 Rb1, Kramnik gains time for the pawn thrust by attacking the h7-pawn.

11...Nhf6 12 b4 Re8 13 Rc1! (Diagram 15)

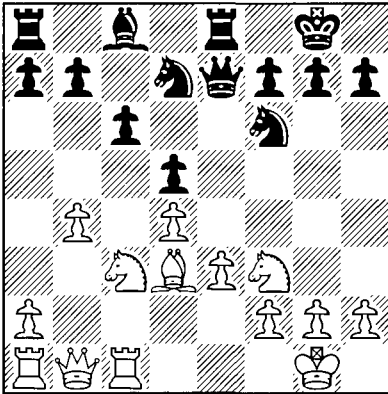


Diagram 15 (B)

White prepares b4-b5

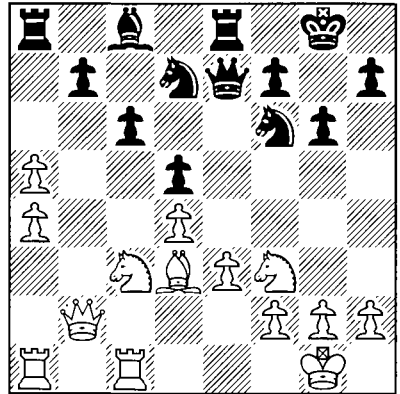


Diagram 16 (B)

Opening the b-file

Here we see another benefit of White's 11th move: the rook can slide straight to the c-file as it isn't boxed in by the queen on d1.

But why not 13 b5 immediately? In that case, Black could reply 13...c5. True, after 14 dxc5 Nxc5 he has an IQP, but the freedom enjoyed by his pieces fully compensates for this static weakness, which the white pieces are in no position to attack in any case.

Subsequently, with ...Bg4 etc., Black would be able to build up an initiative that might make White regret that he had moved his queen so far from the defence of the king.

Now consider the situation after the game move 13 Rc1. Black would like to assert himself in the centre with 13...Ne4, when 14 Bxe4 dxe4 15 Nd2 Nf6 (or maybe 15...f5) gives him a semblance of activity. However, after 13...Ne4 the advance 14 b5! suddenly has teeth, as 14...c5? just drops the d5-pawn, and after 14...Nxc3 15 Rxc3 both c6 and h7 are hanging.

This is typical of the jockeying that takes place in the Minority Attack scenario. White wants to play b4-b5 at the most advantageous moment, when ...c6-c5 in reply fails to solve Black's opening problems.

You will see from the analysis above that it was important for Kramnik to defend

the knight on c3 with 13 Rc1 before Black could arrange ...Ne4.

13...a6 14 a4 g6 15 Qb2

White is in no hurry. Now after the b4-b5 advance he would be able, after ...a6xb5, a4xb5, ...Rxa1, to recapture with his rook and so take control of the open a-file.

15...a5

With no counterplay, Timman loses patience and decides to force matters on the queenside.

16 bxa5! (Diagram 16)

Kramnik isn't very impressed with 16 b5, as 16...c5 blocks the queenside, apart from the c-file – and even there it would be hard to remove the black knight after 17 dxc5 Nxc5. In the actual game, the backward pawn on b7 is more of a target than an IQP would be in this variation.

16...Rxa5 17 Nd2!

With the following scheme in mind: Nb3, a4-a5 and Na4, when the black queenside is in a dark square bind. The c5-square would be an important base for a white knight.

17...Ng4

A bid for counterplay that only succeeds in weakening Black's hold over the e4-square.

18 Nb3 Qd6 19 g3

Definitely not 19 Nxa5?? Qxh2+ 20 Kf1 Rxe3! 21 fxe3 (or else 22...Qh1 mate) 21...Qh1+ 22 Ke2 Qxg2+ winning the white queen. Incidentally, I wonder at what age Kramnik last fell for a trap like that. Perhaps nine years old?

19...Ra7 20 e4! (Diagram 17)

Over the last few moves (...Ng4, ...Qd6, putting the queen in range of a knight on e4), Timman has positively encouraged this second pawn advance. Perhaps he was afraid of being slowly ground down on the queenside and wanted to provoke a crisis in the centre, but if so it quickly leads to disaster.

I imagine that a player with a less counterattacking style – such as Karpov or Kramnik himself – would have submitted to a long and tedious defence after the unsuccessful opening phase and perhaps escaped with a draw.

20...dxe4 21 Nxe4 Qf8 22 Re1

One by one the white pieces regroup to take advantage of Black's weaknesses on the kingside: the dark squares and the vulnerable f7-point.

22...b6 23 Nbd2 Ba6 24 Bc2 Rb7 25 Bb3 Ngf6 26 Rac1 Rc8 27 Nxf6+ Nxf6 28 d5! (Diagram 18)

White's third and decisive pawn advance. As 29 Qxf6 is threatened, Black can't prevent the white knight making lethal contact with the f6-square.

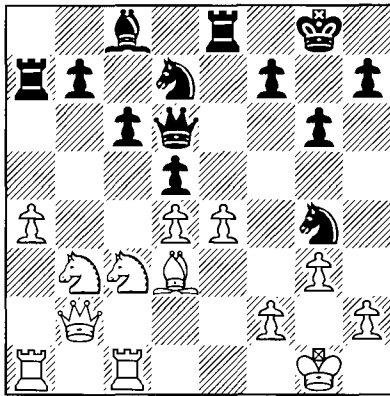


Diagram 17 (B)

Opening yet more lines

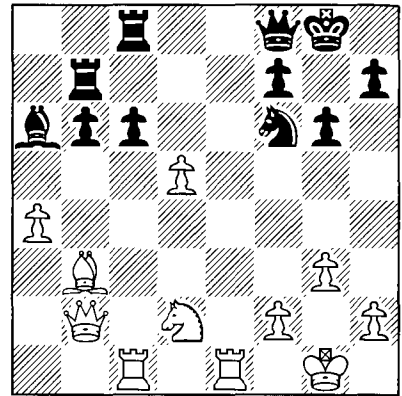


Diagram 18 (B)

A final, decisive pawn advance

28...Nxd5 29 Ne4 Rd8 30 Rxc6

Now everything crumbles away for Black.

30...Qb4 31 Nf6+! Kf8

If 31...Nxf6 32 Bxf7+ uncovers an attack on the black queen.

32 Nxh7+ Kg8 33 Nf6+ Kf8 34 Re4 1-0

If 34...Qa5 35 Nxd5 Rxd5 36 Qh8 mate.

A superb game by Kramnik who took full advantage of Black's failure to coordinate his pieces properly.

Case Study Six: A blindfold masterpiece

Funny how the Queen's Gambit looks like a terrible opening when Kramnik has White, and a great opening when he has Black! Nikolic wasn't enjoying his experience of blindfold play at the Melody Amber tournament, and as a consequence plays just poorly enough to allow the Russian World Champion to demonstrate his wonderful technique.

Game 37

□ P.Nikolic ■ V.Kramnik

Monte Carlo (blindfold rapid) 1998

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 c6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 Bg5 Be7 7 e3?

Already an error. We all know by now that White should play 7 Qc2 to stop the

black bishop hogging the long diagonal.

7...Bf5!

Kramnik doesn't have to be asked twice to put his bishop on f5.

8 Bd3 Bxd3 9 Qxd3 Nbd7 10 o-o o-o

Black has been allowed to develop in effortless style, but Nikolic hopes to keep a tiny edge by inaugurating a Minority Attack.

11 Rab1 a5! (Diagram 19)

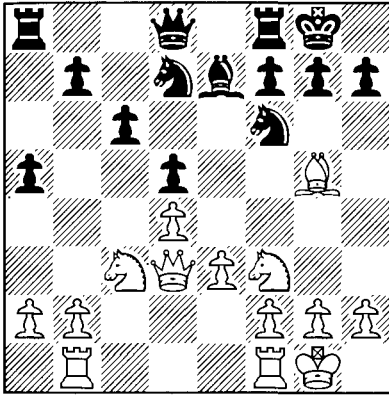


Diagram 19 (W)

Undermining the Minority Attack

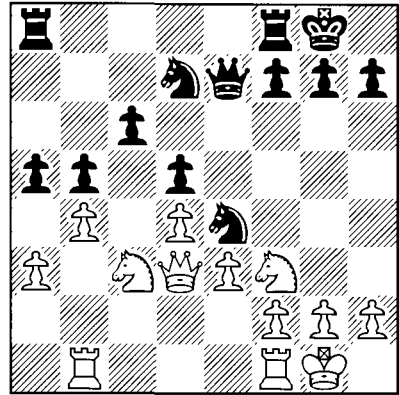


Diagram 20 (W)

A black knight will come to c4

A proactive move which undermines the Minority Attack before it has even started. After White arranges a3-a4 and b2-b4, Black can get rid of the a-pawn with ...a5xb4, at the same time gaining an open file for the rook on a8. Furthermore, it will be seen that after the recapture a3xb4, the white pawn on b4, rather than being an asset, can actually be a target.

12 a3 Ne4!

Black is able to make this freeing move without the preparatory ...Re8, since after 13 Nxe4?? dxe4 White loses a piece, whether he tries 14 Qxe4 Bxg5 or 14 Bxe7 Qxe7.



TIP: Black's freeing ...Ne4 move can be good or bad according to circumstances. Taken to an extreme, it might lose a pawn for nothing, or win a piece if White is careless. Whichever side of the board you are sitting on, handle it with care!

13 Bxe7 Qxe7 14 b4 b5! (Diagram 20)

A very instructive move which paralyses White's Minority Attack. A vital requisite is that a black knight can be placed on the c4-square. Note that if there was any chance at all of the white pawn on b4 'running away' Black would have made the exchange 14...axb4 15 axb4 and only then played 15...b5. But as things stand, 15 bxa5? Qxa3 pins the knight on c3 with an easy win, or if 15 a4? axb4 and White's queenside crumbles.

15 Qc2 axb4 16 axb4

If 16 Nxe4 dxe4 and White loses a couple of pawns as the knight is attacked. Apologies if these comments are obvious, but Black really must make sure that there is no way for White to slip out of his straitjacket.

16...Nd6

It's a good idea to keep both pairs of knights on the board, since if 16...Nxc3 17 Qxc3 and the c6-pawn is hanging, while after 17...Rfc8 18 Ne5!? White activates his game.

17 Rb3 Nb6!

Not rushing into 17...Nc4 as the knight on d6 is well placed and helping restrain the advance e3-e4. It is the duty of the less active knight to go to c4.

18 Ne5 Rfc8 19 Nd3 Nbc4 (Diagram 21)

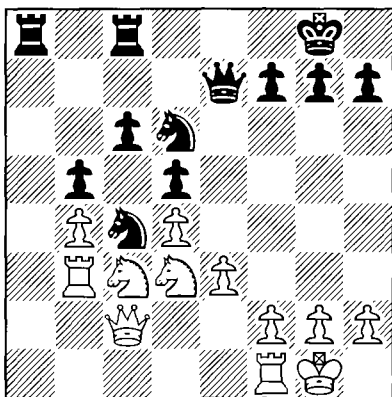


Diagram 21 (W)

The c6-pawn is inviolable

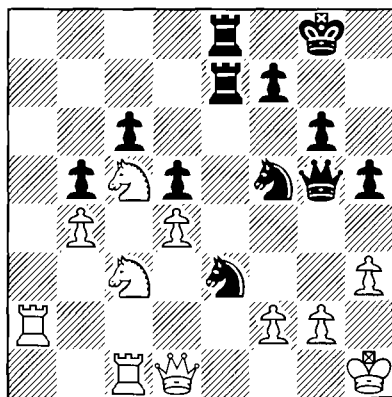


Diagram 22 (W)

Breaking in on the dark squares

It is a truism that a weakness is only a weakness if it can be attacked. Judged from a static point of view, the c6-pawn is one of the most ugly creatures you can meet on a chessboard: the dreaded backward pawn on an open file. But here, nestling behind the knight on c4, it is inviolable and can even take pride in being the linchpin that holds the pawns on b5 and d5 together.

The white pawn on b4 is also well defended, but it has failed in its function of creating open lines for the white pieces and giving them something to aim at – to do that it needed give itself up with b4-b5 and b5xc6, but it never made it.

The consequence is that the white pieces have no real activity. In contrast, Black has possession of the open a-file and can manoeuvre for advantage on the king-side, where there is plenty of space for his pieces, especially along the semi-open e-file.

20 Nc5 Re8 21 h3?

Another example of an unnecessary and debilitating pawn move in front of the king. Kramnik regarded this as the losing move, because it weakens the g3-square and so makes possible the sacrifice on e3 that occurs in the game. Instead he recommended 21 Kh1.

21...g6 22 Rc1 Ra7 23 Qd1 h5

Black edges forwards with his pawns, while White prepares to challenge for control of the a-file.

24 Kh1 Qg5 25 Rbb1 Rae7

Kramnik voluntarily hands over the open file as he is preparing an explosive finale on the e-file.

26 Ra1 Nf5 27 Ra2 Nxe3!! (Diagram 22)

It is somewhat surprising that Black is able to break through and win without using his pawns, but such is the power of his build-up, and the weakness of White's kingside dark squares which can be traced back to 21 h3.

28 fxe3 Rxe3

The threat of 29...Qg3 and then 30...Re1+ or 30...Rxc3 proves too much to bear.

29 Rf2 Qh4

Picking up a third pawn since if 30 Rd2 Re1+.

30 Qd2 Nxd4 31 Rcf1 Nf5

Now both 32...Qxb4 and 32...Ng3+ are looming.

32 Rxf5 gxf5 33 Nd1 Re1 34 Kg1 R8e2 35 Qc3 Rxd1! 0-1

If 36 Rxd1 Qf2+ and mate next move.

White builds up in the centre after Nge2

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 c6 6 Qc2 Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 Nbd7 9 Nge2 (Diagram 23)

First the good news for Black. With the white knight on e2, a Minority Attack with b4-b5 is less likely to be effective. This is partly because White doesn't have Ne5, adding to the pressure on c6; also Black can generate counterplay more quickly as

the white kingside is less well defended (for some reason the moves ...Bd6, ...Qh4 and ...Qxh2 mate flashed through my mind). On the other hand, White won't necessarily renounce the idea of b2-b4, and then stopping on that square, in order to restrain Black from achieving the freeing pawn advance ...c6-c5.

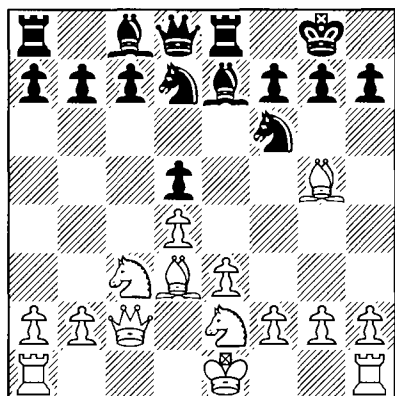


Diagram 23 (B)
White plays Nge2

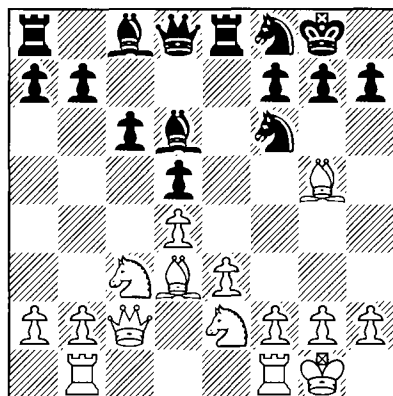


Diagram 24 (W)
White will expand in the centre

White's main plan, which is what really distinguishes it from Nf3, is an expansion in the centre with f2-f3 and e3-e4. First of all, let's see an old game in which White has it all his own way.

Game 38

□ **M.Botvinnik** ■ **P.Keres**

USSR Championship, Moscow 1952

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 Be7 6 e3 0-0 7 Bd3 Nbd7 8 Qc2 Re8 9 Nge2 Nf8 10 0-0 c6 11 Rab1

Aiming for 11 b4 etc., but after Keres's poor reply he changes his strategy.

11...Bd6? (Diagram 24)

The idea behind this move would be laudable if White had a knight on f3 rather than e2. Keres' plan involves putting the bishop immediately on its 'best' square, which is d6, followed by ...Ng6 and ...h7-h6, 'trapping' the white bishop into playing Bxf6. Then after ...Qxf6 in reply Black has achieved the perfect deployment of his bishop and queen with a gain of bags of tempi; i.e. compared to White going Bxf6 with the black bishop still on e7, when after Black recaptures ...Bxf6 he has to play the laborious ...Be7, ...Bd6 and ...Qf6 to achieve the same thing.

Unfortunately for Keres he was playing Botvinnik, who had placed his knight on e2 for a purpose that is obvious to modern theorists, but was apparently less familiar at the time of the game.

12 Kh1!

Botvinnik sidesteps the tactic 12...Bxh2+ followed by 13...Ng4+ and 14...Qxg5 (for if now 12...Bxh2?? 13.Bxf6). He doesn't want to weaken his kingside with 12 h3 as he intends to play other loosening pawn moves.

12...Ng6 13 f3!

Ruining Black's plan, since after 13...h6 14 Bxf6 Qxf6 15 e4 there is no good way to deal with 16 e5.

13...Be7

A sad retreat, after which Black has lost time and has no activity. Therefore Botvinnik is able to build up in the centre unopposed.

14 Rbe1 Nd7 15 Bxe7 Rxe7 16 Ng3 Nf6 17 Qf2 Be6 18 Nf5! Bxf5

Black has little choice but to remove the knight, as otherwise he might be smothered with 19 g4 etc.

19 Bxf5 Qb6 20 e4 (Diagram 25)

Thanks to his astute 18th move, White can make this advance without being bothered by counterplay with ...Ng4.

20...dxe4 21 fxe4 Rd8

Keres centralizes all his pieces and does his best to hang on, but he has no way to counter the dynamism of the mobile white pawns.

22 e5 Nd5 23 Ne4

Heading for d6, when the knight adds to the pressure on d7, the weakest square in the black camp.

23...Nf8 24 Nd6 Qc7 25 Be4 Ne6 26 Qh4 g6 27 Bxd5 cxd5 28 Rc1

The black pieces are being crammed tighter and tighter. It's all thanks to the enormous strength of the pawn on e5.

28...Qd7 29 Rc3 Rf8 (Diagram 26) 30 Nf5!

It's time to finish the game off with a direct attack.

30...Rfe8

Or 30...gxf5 31 Rg3+ Ng7 32 Qf6 and mate next move.

31 Nh6+ Kf8 32 Qf6 Ng7 33 Rcf3 Rc8 34 Nxf7

The collapse of the f7-point represents the triumph of Botvinnik's strategy.

34...Re6 35 Qg5 Nf5 36 Nh6 Qg7 37 g4 1-0

An impressive game, but forewarned is forearmed, and nowadays Black knows how to fight back against White's expansion in the centre. Nevertheless, the move

Nge2 should not be underestimated. I think it would be seen much more in tournaments, but for the simple fact that White often commits his knight to f3 (e.g. 1 Nf3 or 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3) before he even knows it's going to be a Queen's Gambit Declined.

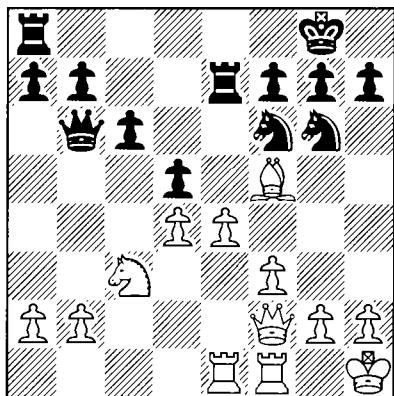


Diagram 25 (B)

The central break finally comes

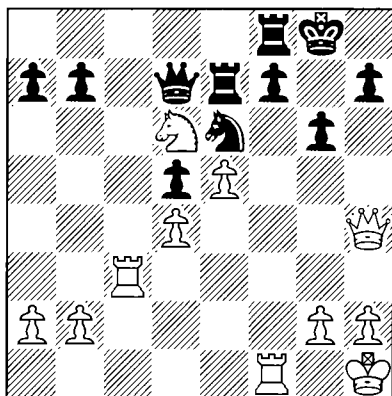


Diagram 26 (W)

White wins by direct attack

Game 39

□ **A.Graf** ■ **A.Panchenko**

Pinsk 1986

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 c6 6 Qc2 Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 Nbd7 9 Nge2 Re8 10 0-0 Nf8

Black's scheme unfolds. The knight will go to g6 and the bishop to e6, while the dark-squared bishop is definitely staying on e7 for the near future.

11 f3 (Diagram 27) 11...Ng6

At the time of writing, 11...Be6 is preferred first, mainly based on the principle that the bishop definitely needs to get out and free the rook on a8, whereas the knight might linger on f8 for a while. Normally both moves happen quickly anyway, but here is one independent line: 11...Be6 12 Rae1 (White delays e3-e4) 12...Rc8 (Black won't hurry with ...c6-c5, as it would leave him with an IQP after d4xc5 – or rather, he wouldn't want to hand over the d4-square to a white knight; on the other hand ...c6-c5 would be the riposte to e3-e4 at various points) 13 Kh1 N6d7! (Black is keen to exchange bishops to increase the space for his other pieces) 14 Bxe7 Qxe7 15 Qd2 (if 15 e4 dxe4 16 fxe4 c5 gives Black similar activity to the

main game) 15...Nb6 (here the knight is ready to jump into c4 after White has advanced e3-e4 and the centre has broken up). We have been following C.Lutz-A.Yusupov, Tilburg 1993. If now 16 e4 c5 looks at least equal for Black.

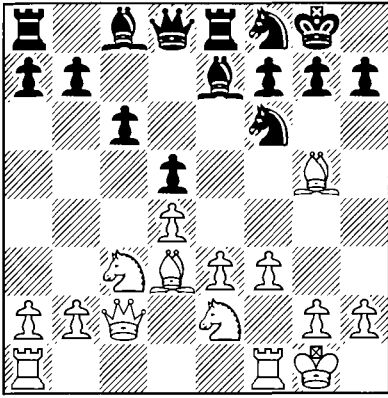


Diagram 27 (B)

White prepares e3-e4 again

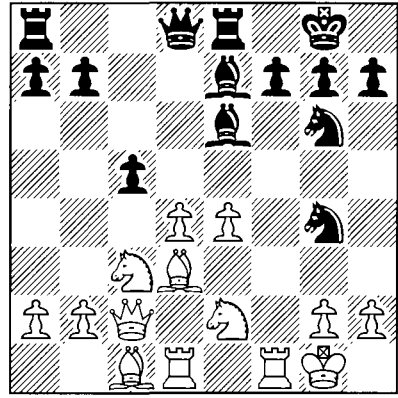


Diagram 28 (W)

Black plays for the dark squares

12 e4 dxe4 13 fxe4 Be6

So White has implemented his plan, but here (unlike in the Keres game) his pawn centre won't have it all its own way. The black minor pieces may be rather cluttered together, but they are bristling with potential dynamism.

14 Rad1 Ng4!

The knight eyes the soft underbelly of the white centre on e3.

15 Bc1

White keeps the bishop to defend the fragile dark squares and also hopes to keep the black camp congested with pieces.

15...c5! (Diagram 28)

An excellent pawn stab. Panchenko is willing to hand over the light squares in order to increase his initiative on the dark squares.

16 d5 Bd7

Now the b8-h2 diagonal is a joy for Black, especially the outpost square for a knight on e5.

17 Bb5

An understandable bid to reassert himself, but it just leads to another dark diagonal being taken over by Black.

17...Bxb5 18 Nxb5 Qb6 19 Nbc3 c4+ 20 Nd4 Bf6 21 Nce2 N6e5 22 h3 Nd3! (Diagram 29)

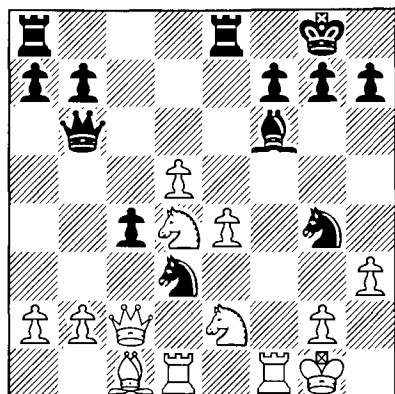


Diagram 29 (W)

Heading for White's dark defender

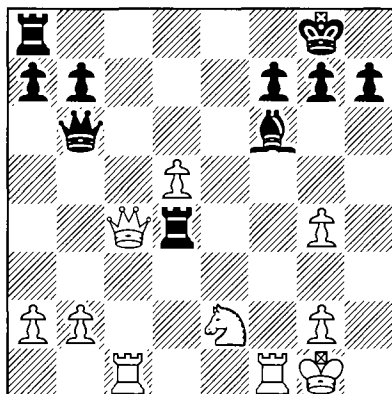


Diagram 30 (W)

The finale is all on the dark squares

Cutting off the defence of d4.

23 Qxc4 Nxc1

In such a situation the exchange of the dark-squared bishop presages a disaster.

24 Rxc1 Rxe4!

Sure enough, Black finds an exchange sacrifice to finish off any dark-square resistance. The final mating attack is quite exciting.

25 hxg4 Rxd4! (Diagram 30) 26 Nxd4 Bxd4+ 27 Kh2 Qh6+ 28 Kg3 Qe3+ 29 Kh4

Or 29 Rf3 Be5+ 30 Kh3 Qh6 mate.

29...g5+ 30 Kh5 Qg3 31 Rh1 Qd6 32 Kxg5 Qf6+ 33 Kh5 Be3 0-1

The exchange of queens usually benefits Black in the Queen's Gambit Declined, but it is especially the case when White plays for a centre expansion with f2-f3 and e3-e4. This is because using the mobile centre to instigate a direct attack on the black king is a key feature of White's plan.

Game 40

□ **A.Karpov** ■ **G.Kasparov**

World Championship (47th matchgame), Moscow 1985

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 d4 d5 4 Nc3 c6 5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 e3 Qa5

The game begins as a Cambridge Springs, but an Exchange centre soon appears.

7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qd2 N7b6 9 Nxd5?!

This was game 47 of a long and gruelling World Championship match that lasted five months. Karpov led by the overwhelming score of 5-1, but he seemed very fatigued at this point in the proceedings and in no mood for a double-edged fight. Therefore Kasparov made an astute choice with his opening, which results in Karpov selecting a feeble simplifying move that directs play into a type of Exchange Variation. Unfortunately for him, it turns out to be least equal for Black.

9...Qxd2+ 10 Nxd2 exd5 11 Bd3

Of course White prevents Black activating his bishop with 11...Bf5. Left to his own devices White might now have played for a Minority Attack against c6 with moves like 12 0-0, 13 Rfb1, 14 b4 and 15 b5.

11...a5! (Diagram 31)

Putting a stop to Karpov's scheme before he can even dream about it. Even worse for White: if left unattended the black rook's pawn could advance to a3. Then capturing it with b2xa3 would leave the a2-pawn isolated and weak after ...Rxa3 or ...Bxa3; whereas after b2-b3, the adventurous pawn on a3 would be far advanced and safe from attack, making all endgames unpleasant for White.

12 a4

Karpov stops the pawn in its tracks, but now the pawn on a4 is weak and, even worse, there is a perfect post for the black bishop in the hole on b4. Instead 12 f3 has been recommended, stopping the idea seen on Black's 13th move.

12...Bb4

Note that the bishop on g5 is playing little part in the battle. In fact, it would be better off sitting on c1, albeit trapped behind White's pawn chain, as then it could help defend the queenside.

13 Ke2 Bg4+! (Diagram 32)

Bravo. In the Exchange Variation, Black often struggles to find a good square for this bishop once White has prevented it going to f5. Kasparov cleverly reroutes it to g6, where it can be exchanged for White's good bishop on d3.

14 f3

If there were still queens on the board, and the white king were tucked away on the kingside, this move would be a useful plank in a central expansion with e3-e4. In that case, Black would have been foolhardy to provoke it. Here, however, it is the white king who has to be afraid of open lines in the centre.

14...Bh5 15 h4 0-0 16 g4 Bg6 17 b3 Bxd3+ 18 Kxd3 Rfe8 19 Rac1 c5! (Diagram 33)

This is a thematic move against the f2-f3 centre anyway, so it's even better when there is a king to attack.

20 Bf4

Or 20 dxc5 Nd7 and Black will regain the pawn, using ...Ne5+ if necessary.

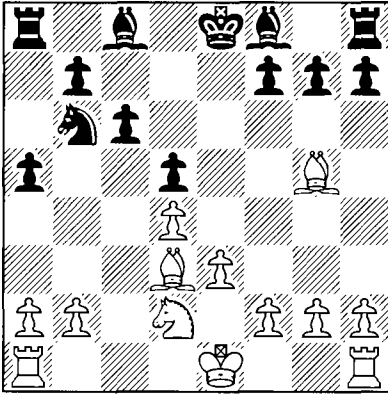


Diagram 31 (W)

Pre-empting the Minority Attack

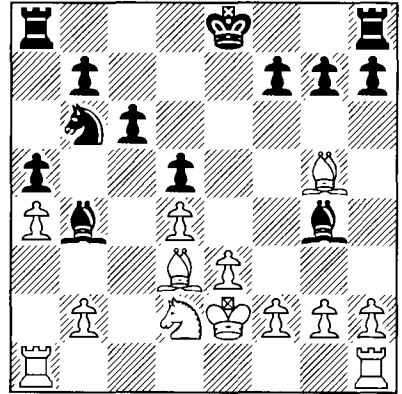


Diagram 32 (W)

The black bishop heads for g6

20...Rac8 21 dxc5 Nd7 22 c6 bxc6 23 Rhd1 Nc5+ 24 Kc2 f6 25 Nf1

It looks as if White may have avoided the worst, but Kasparov is in no hurry. He repositions a couple of his pieces and is then ready to begin the final onslaught against the white king. Meanwhile, White is strangely paralysed.

25...Ne6 26 Bg3 Red8 27 Bf2 c5 28 Nd2 c4 (Diagram 34) 29 bxc4 Nc5 30 e4 d4!

The passed pawn wins the day.

31 Nb1 d3+ 32 Kb2 d2 0-1

A fork is looming on d3.

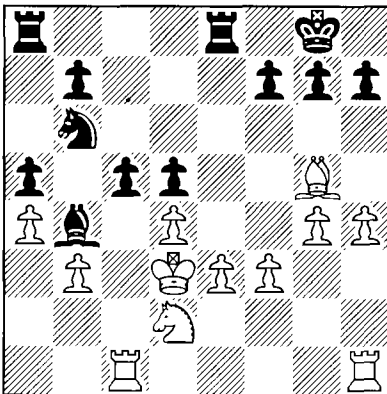


Diagram 33 (W)

The thematic counterthrust

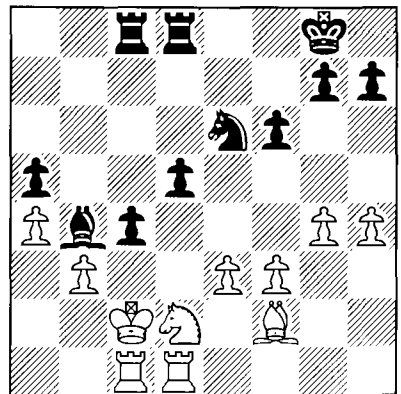


Diagram 34 (W)

The final assault

White Castles Queenside

This is, of course, an entirely different approach by White: he isn't interested in the shadow of an advantage on c6, he wants the black king's head.

In this section we shall examine both Nf3 and Nge2 positions. There are many move orders, but the basic set-up being fought over is **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 c6 6 Qc2 Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 Nbd7 (Diagram 35)**, with the white knight either on e2 or f3.

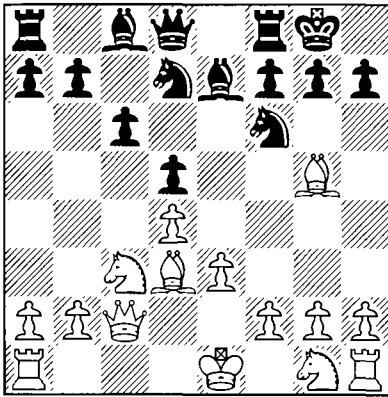


Diagram 35 (W)

White will castle long

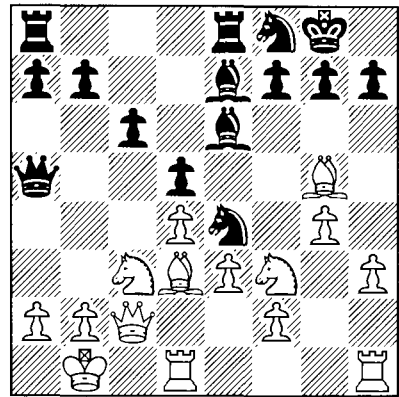


Diagram 36 (W)

...Ne4 is key to Black's defence

The line with Nf3: Black counterattacks in the centre

I like Black's approach in the following game, which seems to quickly extinguish White's attacking ardour.

Game 41

□ **K.Bischoff** ■ **P.Van der Sterren**

Munich 1990

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 Be7 6 e3 Nbd7 7 Nf3 c6 8 Qc2 0-0 9 Bd3 Re8 10 h3

White keeps his opponent guessing which way he will castle. He might be intending 0-0-0 and g2-g4, or just stopping a future ...Bg4 after 0-0.

10...Nf8 11 0-0-0 Be6

Black's plan is actually quite simple: he calmly sticks his bishop on e6 and the

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

queen on a5, and then strikes at the centre with ...Ne4!

11 0-0-0 Be6 12 Kb1 Qa5 13 g4 Ne4! (Diagram 36)

The key to Black's system of defence. It is consistent with the principle that you should meet an attack on the wing with a counterstrike in the centre.

14 Bxe7

White has to watch out for tactics after 14 Bxe7 dxe4, when the knight on f3 is hanging, the bishop on g5 is about to be done in by ...Bxg5, and a2 is also under some pressure. Thus if 15 Nxe4?? Qxa2+ 16 Kb1 Bb3 wins material. So he should play 15 Bxe7 Rxe7 16 Nd2 (and not 16 Qxe4?? Bxa2+ dropping the queen), when Black has 16...Rae8, indirectly defending the e4-pawn, as 17 Ndx4 Bxa2+ 18 Nxa2 Rxe4 looks quite good for Black.

14...Nxc3+ 15 Qxc3

There goes any chance that Black will be mated by a brilliant attack.

15...Qxc3 16 bxc3 Rxe7 17 Kc2 c5 18 Rb1 c4 19 Be2 Bd7 20 Kd2 b5 21 Ne1 Bc6

The bishop may supposedly be 'bad' but it is doing good job staunching up b5 and d5.

22 Nc2 a5 23 a4 b4! (Diagram 37)

The decision of a Grandmaster. After 23...bxa4, the black passed pawn would be going nowhere, and White could build up pressure with moves like Rb6, Na3 and possibly even Nxc4 (if the pawn on d5 is pinned against the black bishop). It may not be winning for White, but it certainly isn't going to end in a win for Black, so why should Van der Sterren let himself fall into a bind?

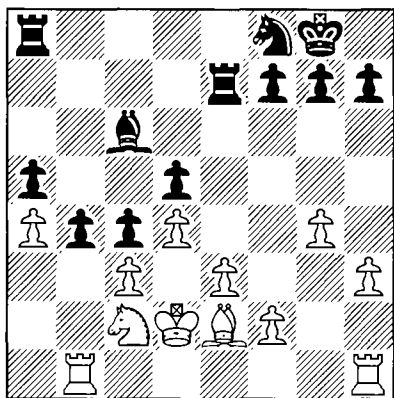


Diagram 37 (W)

Forestalling any White ambitions

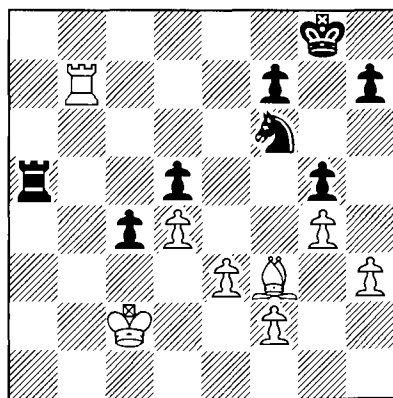


Diagram 38 (W)

A draw is inevitable

24 cxb4 Bxa4 25 bxa5 Bxc2 26 Kxc2 Rxa5 27 Ra1 Rea7 28 Rxa5 Rxa5 29 Rb1 g5!

Creating a breathing space for the king and, at the same time, preventing any further advance of White's kingside pawns, as after 30 f4? gxf4 31 exf4 Ne6 both d4 and f4 are hanging.

30 Bf3 Nd7

The knight heads for f6 to bolster d5, after which a draw becomes inevitable.

31 Rb7 Nf6 (Diagram 38) 32 Rb6 Kg7 33 Kb2 Ra7 34 Rb5 Rd7 35 Rb6 Ra7 36 Rb5 Rd7 37 Rb6 ½-½

The line with Nge2: Black counterattacks on the queenside

In the Nge2 version, the white knight fits nicely on g3, after moves such as g2-g4 and h2-h3, where it eyes the f5-square. This is all very logical as it was the f5-square that was weakened in the opening by the pawn exchange cxd5, ...exd5. Also, on g3 the knight deters Black's counterattacking/simplifying move ...Ne4, and so makes it harder for him to fight against the kingside onslaught. Naturally, Black has found some antidotes over the years, but he is still in for a tough, double-edged struggle. Never mind: White is taking a risk in castling queenside, and Black therefore has a better chance of getting the full point than in most lines of the Queen's Gambit.

In view of the observation above, I don't think the ...Ne4 scheme works very well in the Nge2 line. Therefore I recommend that Black use his queenside pawns to seek counterplay.

Game 42

□ **M.Cebalo** ■ **V.Inkiiov**

Rome 1985

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 Be7 6 e3 c6 7 Bd3 Nbd7 8 Qc2 0-0 9 Nge2 Re8 (Diagram 39) 10 h3

Again this preparatory move precedes castling.

10...Nf8

The prescribed move, but on the other hand the knight moves away from the queenside where it could have bolstered the counterattack there. However, thanks to White's canny 10th move, if Black does anything explicitly against queenside castling, he could end up with a silly pawn structure for nothing after 10...b5 11 0-0!

11 0-0-0 b5!?



NOTE: The backward pawn on c6 isn't an issue here, but in the Nf3 line it might well have been, as White has Ne5 at some point, perhaps immediately. So it seems best to keep separate lines against Nf3 and Nge2, rather than trying to find an identical treatment that works against both of them.

12 Kb1 a5 (Diagram 40)

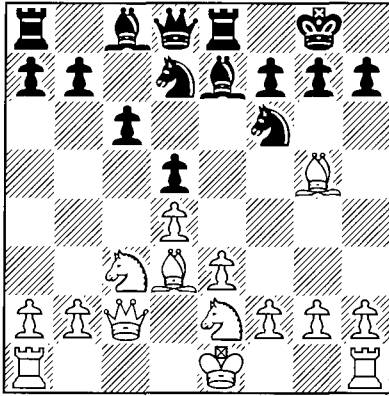


Diagram 39 (W)

Position after 9...Re8

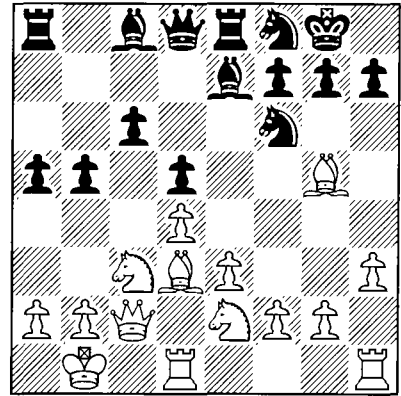


Diagram 40 (W)

Black starts his offensive first

I thought this was an aggressive line for White, but it is Black doing all the attacking so far!

13 g4 a4

Not 13...b4 14 Na4 when the queenside is blocked.

14 Ng3 Qa5

Here 14...b4 is again premature as 15 Nxa4 Qa5 16 b3 shuts out the black pieces.

15 Nce2

The knight retreats before it becomes a hook for opening lines with 15...b4 and 16...b3.

15...Bd7 16 Bf5

This doesn't work out very well. White needed to use the knight on g3 to open lines and give himself counterplay, e.g. 16 Nh5 Nxh5 17 Bxe7 Rxe7 18 gxh5 b4 with unclear play, or 16 Nf5 Bxf5 17 gxf5 Rac8 18 Rhg1 Kh8 19 f3 c5 20 Nf4 N8d7 21 Qg2 Rg8, again with obscure play in E.Vladimirov-A.Baburin, Leningrad 1989.

16...b4 17 Qd2

The queen also has to run from ...b4-b3.

17...g6!

Urging the bishop to capture on d7, as Inkiow has seen a way to make the modest knight on f8 into a monster on c4.

18 Bxd7 N8xd7 19 Rc1 Rac8 20 Nf4 Nb6 (Diagram 41)

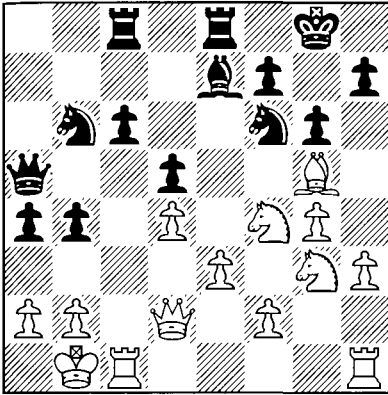


Diagram 41 (W)

Black's attack is faster

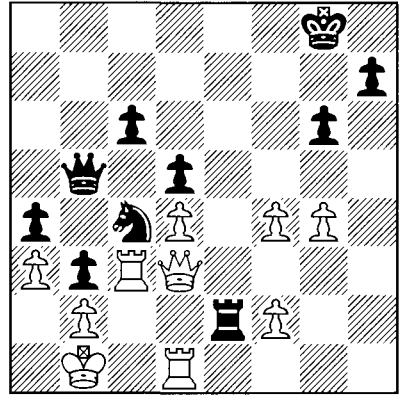


Diagram 42 (W)

White should lose

Once this knight lands on c4, White's whole queenside will be creaking. Mean-time, he hasn't yet progressed to a critical point in his kingside counterplay.

21 Rhd1 Nc4 22 Qe2 Qb5 23 h4 Bd6 24 h5 Ne4

So Black is able to play ...Ne4 after all. As well as g5, the horse is now threatening to take off both white knights and then win the queen with the discovered attack ...Na3+.

25 Nxe4 Rxe4 26 Qd3 b3! 27 a3

The queenside pawns are locked, but that shouldn't save White as the black pieces are poised to crash through the centre.

27...Rce8 28 hxg6 fxg6 29 Rc3 Bxf4 30 Bxf4 Rxf4!

This excellent sacrifice allows the other black rook to invade the seventh rank.

31 exf4 Re2! (Diagram 42)

A crushing move, since if 32 Qxe2 Nxa3+ wins the queen.

32 Kc1 Rxb2?

Throwing away the win. Inkiow later pointed out that 32...Nxb2! was the way to do it, when the mass of passed pawns on the queenside gives Black the full point; for example, 33 Qxb5 cxb5 34 Rc8+ Kf7 35 Rd2 Rxd2 36 Kxd2 Nc4+ 37 Kc3 Nxa3 38 Rb8 Nc4 39 Rxb5 b2 40 Rb7+ Ke6 41 Kc2 a3 42 Ra7 Nd2! and Black wins.

33 Rxc4! dxc4 34 Qe4 Rc2+ 35 Kb1 c3 1/2-1/2

Agreeing to perpetual check on e8, e7 and h4. Against other moves Black can at least force a draw himself with ...Rc2+ and ...Rb2+ etc.

So we have seen one comfortable draw and one near win for Black against queen-side castling.

The Exchange Variation after 3...Be7

Yes, I know we are supposed to develop knights before bishops, and the Queen's Gambit is one of the most 'principled' openings. Even so, the immediate bishop deployment with **3...Be7 (Diagram 43)** is a subtlety which was much favoured in Kasparov-Karpov World Championship matches. Black delays ...Nf6 until his opponent has committed himself to 4 Nf3, thereby ruling out any plans of attack involving Nge2. Besides, doesn't the bishop always go to e7 anyway in the Queen's Gambit, so why not put it there straightaway?

In practice most of your games will transpose to other chapters of this book after 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bg5 etc. Then Black has achieved his wish of dodging Nge2. On the other hand, White is likely to be completely unfazed at being 'tricked' in this fashion, as he had no intention whatsoever of playing Nge2!

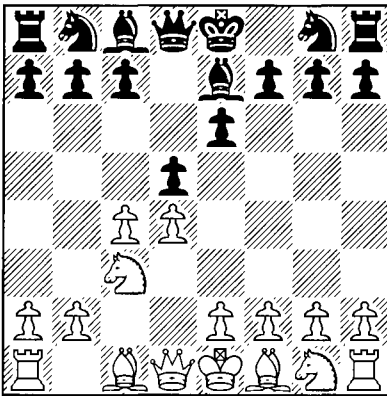


Diagram 43 (W)
Black plays 3...Be7

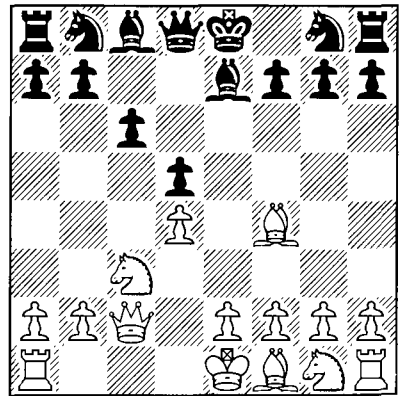


Diagram 44 (B)
Preventing ...Bf5

Game 43

□ A.Baburin ■ D.King

British League 2004

1 d4 e6 2 c4 d5 3 Nc3 Be7 4 cxd5

Baburin decides to direct play immediately into the Exchange Variation.

4...exd5 5 Bf4

Denied the right to go to g5, the bishop settles for its second best square.

5...c6

Black would like to develop his bishop to a nice open diagonal, but 5...Bf5? drops a pawn to 6 Qb3!, as he is unable to defend both b7 and d5. In some lines Black deliberately offers a pawn in this fashion to entice the white queen into capturing on b7, as he hopes to gain tactical counterplay; see for example the note to 9 Qd2 below. However, in most cases, such as here, he has simply blundered.



WARNING: If your opponent offers you the chance to go ...Bf5 'for free', make sure he isn't waiting to hit you with Qb3!

Now that the c6-pawn is defended, Black is ready to play 6...Bf5, as 7 Qb3 is easily countered by 7...Qb6, when 8 Qxb6 axb6 has strengthened Black's queenside pawns and given the black rook the semi-open a-file. Therefore the wily Grandmaster immediately seizes the diagonal:

6 Qc2! (Diagram 44)

However, 6 e3 was also possible, with the plan of enticing the bishop to f5 in order to gain time by hitting it with pawns. Beginning with Botvinnik, some world class players have analysed this in detail, but at less exalted levels you will rarely encounter an opponent who has learnt an opening line that only applies against the uncommon 3...Be7. Play could go 6...Bf5 (the 'Danny King plan' with 6...Bd6 and 7...Ne7 was still viable) 7 g4!? Be6 8 h4 c5! 9 dxc5 Bxc5 10 Nge2 Nc6 and Black is active in this unclear position (but not 10...Bxg4 11 Qxd5 which favours White).

6...Bd6!?

After 6...g6 7 e3 Bf5 8 Qd2! Nd7 Black has got his bishop out, but the plan of 9 f3, followed by the centre expansion 10 e4, or in some cases g2-g4, keeps the edge for White; e.g. 9...g5 (making space for the bishop) 10 Bg3 Ngf6 11 Bd3 Bg6 and the slight weakness of the black kingside means he hasn't quite equalized.

With the game move, King plans an interesting regrouping of the pieces. The knight will go to e7 and then ...Bf5 will equalize.

7 Bg3

Rather than exchange on d6, White wants to cajole Black into playing 7...Bxg3 when 8 hxg3 gives the rook on h1 an open line.

My first thought when looking at the position was: 'what happens if White plays 7 Nxd5 here?' Obviously if 7...cxd5?! 8 Bxd6 Qxd6? 9 Qxc8+ is resigning time. Instead 7...Qa5+ appears to win a piece for Black, but after 8 Nc3 Bxf4 there is a sting in the tail: 9 Qe4+ Ne7 10 Qxf4 and White regains his piece a pawn up. This actually happened in C.Hanley-L.Trent, Witley 2001. However, Black can spoil White's fun with the simple 7...Bxf4 8 Nxf4 Qxd4 when after 9 e3?! Qb4+ or 9 Nd3 Nf6 (9...Bf5!?) 10 Nf3 Qb6 Black looks very comfortable.

So 7 Nxd5 fails. Still, it's nice to know that writing about Nxd5 tricks in the Tartakower and Orthodox has made me tactically alert, I hope it has the same effect on you!

7...Ne7 8 e3 Bf5 (Diagram 45)

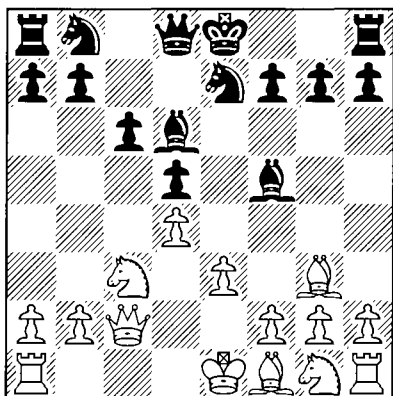


Diagram 45 (W)

What if White plays 9 Qb3 ?

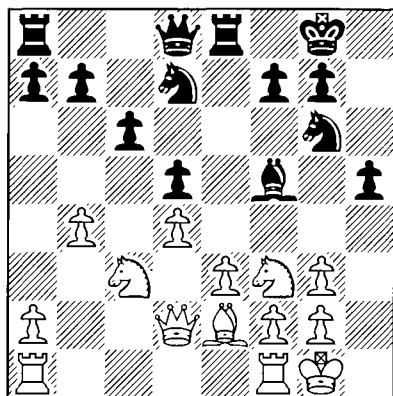


Diagram 46 (W)

The g3-pawn presents a hook

9 Qd2

And we shouldn't forget about tricks down the b-file either. After 9 Qb3, the black queen is overworked if it tries to defend b7; i.e. 9...Qb6? just hangs the bishop on d6, and 9...Qd7? 10 Bxd6 Qxd6 11 Qxb7 is no better. Meanwhile, 9...b6? is one of those rubbishy weakenings of the pawn structure that you should avoid if at all possible.

Black has an unexpected solution in 9...Nc8!. The knight lends a hand in defending the bishop on d6, so that 10...Qb6 or maybe 10...Qe7 defending b6 become possible. And what about the b7-pawn? After 10 Qxb7?? Nb6! the rook on a8 is defended and the impulsive queen is surrounded, meaning that White has to resort to desperate measures to prevent 11...Bc8.

9...0-0 10 Nf3

A natural developing move, but it is far too insipid. After the game Baburin pointed out that 10 Be2 was more enterprising, when if 10...Ng6 (as in the game) White can generate attacking chances with 11 Bxd6 Qxd6 12 g4 Be6 13 h4 etc. The verdict is only 'unclear' but at least White is doing something, whereas in the game he is drifting into passivity.

10...Ng6 11 Be2 Re8 12 0-0

This was White's last chance to play actively with 12 Bxd6 Qxd6 13 h4 etc. (Baburin).

12...Bxg3

Black is shrewd enough to delay this exchange until White has castled kingside, when there is no longer a rook on h1 to attack h7. Furthermore, as we shall soon see, the pawn on g3 will be an attractive target for Black's counterattack.

13 hxg3 Nd7 14 b4

At last the Minority Attack appears, but it is a lukewarm affair.

14...h5! (Diagram 46)

In contrast, this counterthrust against the white king has real bite. Normally, the first wave of the black attack should be carried out with the pieces, and only if White is obliged to advance his kingside pawns should Black also use his pawns. Here, however, the pawn on g3 already presents a hook which Black can use to break open lines.

15 b5 Nb6

There is no need to rush, as White can't improve his position in any meaningful way. In contrast, Black will reap a rather unexpected reward for aiming the knight at the c4-square, which is a structural hole created by the advance of the white b-pawn.

16 bxc6 bxc6 17 Rfe1 h4 18 gxh4 Nxh4 19 g3

This doesn't help, but after 19 Nxh4 Qxh4 Black can play for mate on h1 with 20...Re6 and 21...Rh6. Even more drastic is 19 Ne5 Nxg2! 20 Kxg2 Qg5+ 20 Kxg2 Qg5+ and the white king is helpless, e.g. 21 Kf1 Bh3 mate, or 21 Kf3 Rxe5 22 dxe5 Qg4 mate, or finally 21 Kh2 Re6 with a quick mate after 22...Rh6.

19...Nc4! (Diagram 47)

A vital gain of energy for Black's initiative. If 20 Bxc4 Nxf3+ wins instantly.

20 Qc1 Nxf3+ 21 Bxf3 Rb8!

So far we have been raving about Black's attack on the kingside, but suddenly it is on the open b-file that he is dominant: the bishop on f5 prevents a challenge for control of the file with 22 Rb1, while the black knight supports an invasion with 22...Rb2, to be followed by 23...Rc2, winning the knight on c3.

It's not unusual for the nature of an advantage to change. Here Black's potential attack on the kingside has materialized as a real attack on the queenside. Of

course, without the strain put on White to ward off the danger on the kingside (19 g3 Nc4!), the open b-file would never have fallen into Black's hands. Everything in chess strategy is connected somehow; as we shall see, threats to the white king still play a big part in Black's plans.

12 Na4 Qf6 23 Nc5

Making things easier for Black as the rook gets to b2, but in any case White would be in very bad shape after 23...Rb4 etc.

23...Rb2 24 Bd1 Qxd4!! (Diagram 48)

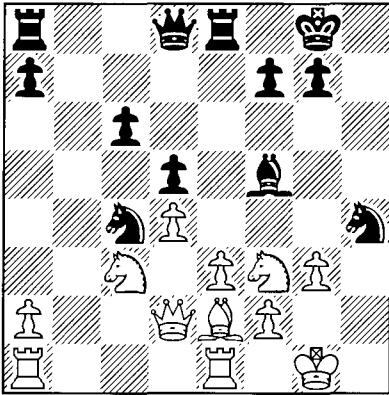


Diagram 47 (W)

Black's initiative gains momentum

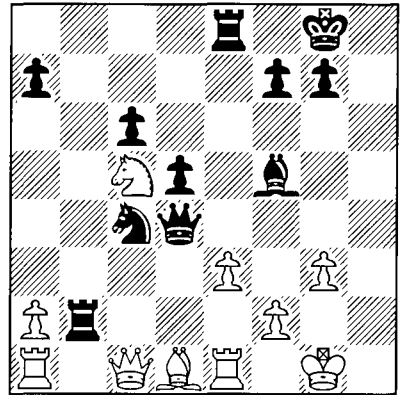


Diagram 48 (W)

Winning a pawn and the game

A brilliant way to coordinate the action of the black pieces on the kingside and queenside. After 25 exd4 Rxe1+ 26 Kg2 (if 26 Kh2 Rxf2 mate) 26...Ne3+, White has to give back the queen with 27 Qxe3 and remain the exchange and a pawn down, as 27 Kf3 Bg4+ 28 Kf4 Rxf2+ 29 Kg5 Rf5+ 30 Kh4 g5 (the prettiest!) mates.

The rest is rather prosaic. Black duly converts his extra pawn into a passed pawn.

25 Re2 Qf6 26 Rxb2 Nxb2 27 Bc2 Bg4 28 Nd3 Nxd3 29 Bxd3 Bf3 30 Bf1 c5 31 Bg2 d4 32 exd4 cxd4 33 Rb1 d3 34 Bxf3 Qxf3 35 Qc4 d2 36 Qf1 g6 37 Rd1

Losing at once, but there was nothing to be done about 37...Qc3 and 38...Re1, breaking the blockade.

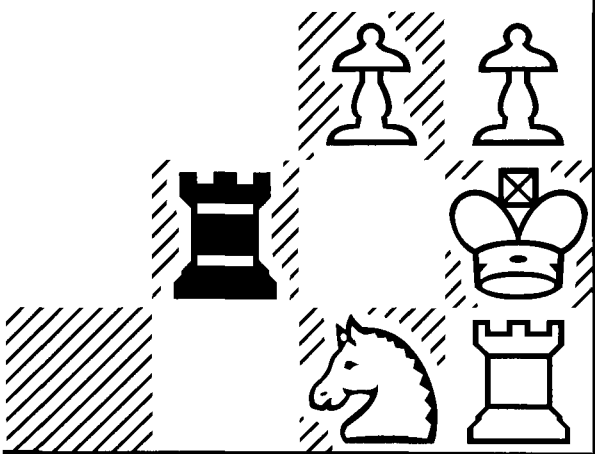
37...Qxd1 38 Qxd1 Re1+ 0-1

I'm pleased to be able to end the coverage of the Exchange Variation with such a great win by Black.

Chapter Seven

White Plays Bf4

- Introduction
- The main line: 5 Bf4
- Various approaches after 6 e3
- Energetic and best: 6...c5!
- White keeps the central tension



Introduction

As most of White's greatest joys and Black's bitterest misfortunes occur down the c-file in the Queen's Gambit, there is a lot to be said for aiming the bishop at c7 immediately. Here we are mainly concerned with the starting moves **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0** (Diagram 1).

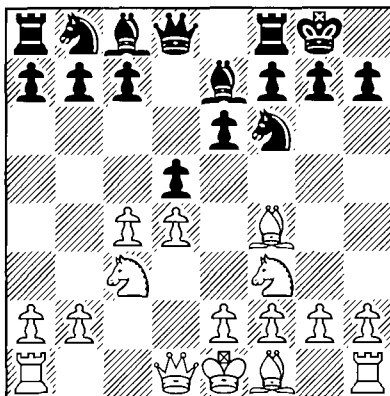


Diagram 1 (W)

White plays Bf4

You will notice in the above sequence that Black develops his kingside in the usual manner; but instead of playing 4 Bg5, White first puts his knight on f3, and then the bishop on f4. In fact he has various move orders available: for example 1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bf4 or 1 Nf3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bf4, but it is rather unusual for him to play Bf4 before developing both knights.

The only real exception is if Black plays 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7, delaying ...Nf6, when 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bf4 might follow.

The name of the opening

When you consider all the obscure lines in the King's Gambit that have their own names, it beats me why the best that chess players can come up with is '5 Bf4 versus the Queen's Gambit Declined' to describe one of the oldest moves in the history of the game.

Queen's bishop friendly?

The line 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 is so-so. If White decides to give his opponent an IQP,

then the bishop finds an active post on g4; but in the more positionally complex lines with 8 Qc2, it can be move 15 or more before the bishop is able to stir off the back rank. And then it might only be vacating the c8-square to allow ...Rac8 rather than doing anything positive. On the other hand, if the bishop *does* become active, it can be a star piece.

The Rubinstein Trap

Before we look at opening theory, here is a warning from history about the danger Black faces on c7 if he is careless.

The Rubinstein Trap is probably unique in the world of chess, as it is named not after the player who first carried it out or analysed it in a book, but after *the player who fell into it!* That may seem hard on Akiba Rubinstein. (Yes, we are talking about the player who was one of the best in the world from 1907 to 1922 and won that nice game against Salwe in Chapter One). Nevertheless, he really should have known better the second time!

□ M.Euwe ■ A.Rubinstein

Bad Kissingen 1928

1 Nf3 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d4 Nf6 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 e3 Be7 6 Nc3 0-0 7 Rc1 c6 8 Bd3 a6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 0-0 Re8 11 Qb3 h6 12 Bf4 (Diagram 2)

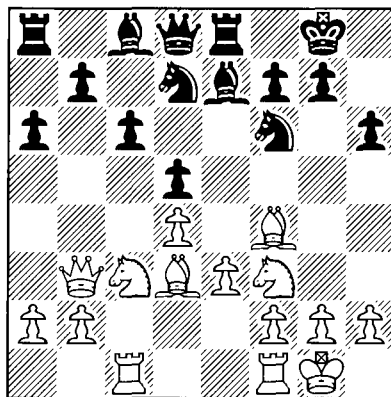


Diagram 2 (B)

Keep an eye on d5

Here Black played **12...Nh5?**, which on the face of it seems a good idea as it aims to get rid of White's strong bishop. Alas after **13 Nxd5!!** a pawn is stolen in broad

daylight as 13...cxd5 14 Bc7 wins the black queen. One can sympathize with the blunder, as the d5-point looked invincible.

In the game after 13...Nxf4 14 Nxf4 Bd6 15 Ne2 Black was a pawn down for nothing and resigned at move 54.

□ **A.Alekhine** ■ **A.Rubinstein**

San Remo 1930

1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 c4 e6 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 e3 Be7 6 Nc3 O-O 7 Rc1 Re8 8 Qc2 a6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Bd3 c6 11 O-O (Diagram 3)

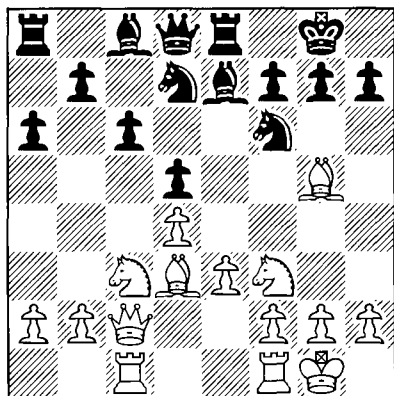


Diagram 3 (B)

And again!

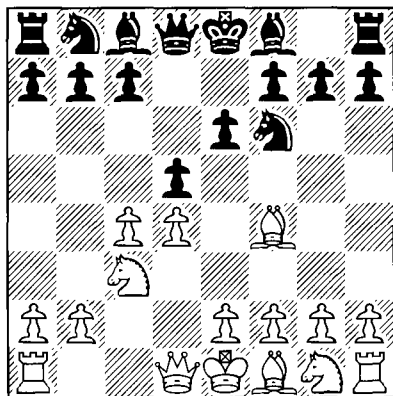


Diagram 4 (B)

White plays 4 Bf4

Here Rubinstein played the standard freeing move **11...Ne4** which was met by **12 Bf4**.

Now timid souls or those with a good memory might have played 12...Nef6, admitting his mistake in going to e4, but Rubinstein supported his knight with **12...f5??**. You've guessed, there followed **13 Nxd5!** when Black was a clean pawn down after 13...Bd6 14 Bxd6 Nxd6 15 Nf4 and resigned at move 46.

The unknown 4 Bf4

As described above, if White is going to play Bf4 in the opening, it is almost always on move five, e.g. 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4. Instead 4 Bf4 (**Diagram 4**) is hardly ever played, though GM Mikhail Gurevich did once use it to beat a FIDE Master in 13 moves:

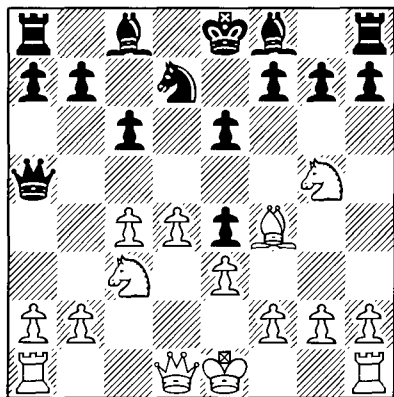
Game 44

□ M.Gurevich ■ A.Reuss

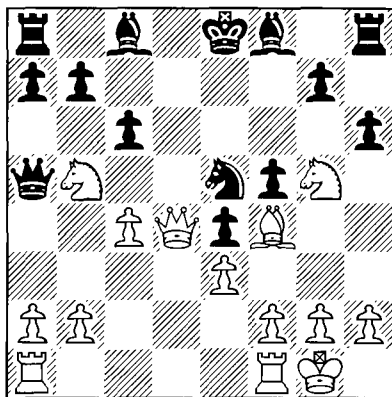
German League 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bf4 c6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Nf3 Qa5 7 Bd3 Ne4?

The decision to treat the opening in the style of the Cambridge Springs proves costly to Black. With the white bishop safely on f4, rather than g5, all this knight excursion achieves is a weak pawn on e4.

8 Bxe4 dxe4 9 Ng5! (Diagram 5)**Diagram 5 (B)**

The e4-pawn is just weak

**Diagram 6 (B)**

It's a massacre

9...e5

Useless is 9...Bb4 10 Ngxe4 f5 11 Nd6+, while 9...Nf6 10 0-0 Qf5 (to hold on to e4) 11 f3! opens up the game to the embarrassment of the black queen.

10 dxe5 Nxe5 11 0-0 f5 12 Nb5! h6

Or 12...cxb5 13 Bxe5 bxc4 14 Bxg7! Bxg7 15 Qh5+ Kd7 16 Qf7+ Kc6 17 Qxg7 and Black is wrecked.

13 Qd4! 1-0 (Diagram 6)

It is a massacre after 13...cxb5 14 Qxe5+ Be7 15 Qxg7 etc.

A valuable lesson in the art of surprising your opponent. You can bet Gurevich wouldn't have won so quickly if he had played the 'correct' 4 Nf3!

So why don't we see 4 Bf4 more often? Let's look at other options for Black. He

could, for example, just play all the normal moves: 4...Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 c5 when we have arrived back at 'chess civilization', which will be discussed later in the chapter.

However, 4...Bb4!? is more ambitious, activating the bishop without any of the usual ...Be7 nonsense, as 5 Bg5 would now just be a waste of a tempo by White.

Finally, there is 4...Bd6!?, offering an exchange of bishops without having to jump through the ...Ne4 or ...Nd5 hoops of the Lasker and Tartakower defences. I think this last approach is most consistent with the ethos of the Queen's Gambit.

The main line: 5 Bf4

We should now turn to the theme of this chapter, namely the position after **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 (Diagram 7)**

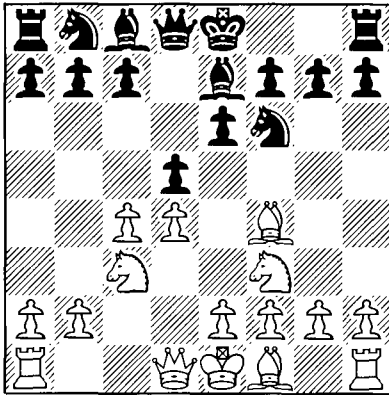


Diagram 7 (B)
White plays 5 Bf4

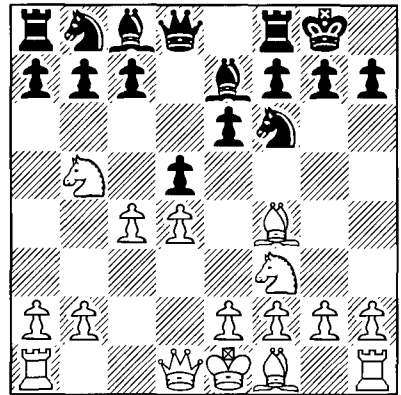


Diagram 8 (B)
A naïve attack

In contrast to Bg5 lines, the bishop avoids becoming part of a freeing mechanism by Black based on ...Ne4 (or ...Nd5), as occurs, for example, in Lasker's Defence (4 Bg5 Be7 5 Nf3 h6 6 Bh4 0-0 7 e3 Ne4). Black is therefore prevented from easing his game with the exchange of a couple of pieces, including the white bishop itself. As a general rule, the more pieces on the board, the greater the defender's task.

On the other hand, Black's natural freeing move in the Queen's Gambit is ...c7-c5. As has been discussed elsewhere, with 4 Bg5 White is beginning an immediate campaign to prevent this move – or rather, make it less appetizing for Black – by attacking the knight that defends d5. There isn't the same pressure on the black centre with the bishop on f4.

Nevertheless 5 Bf4 is a sound, aggressive move which breaks no positional rules and so maintains White's opening advantage. It has been ventured by a lot of world class players, including Kasparov, so Black had better be careful!

An over-zealous attack on c7

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0

Perhaps it's only me, but the first thing I'd want to know is whether I'm going to be wiped out by...

6 Nb5 (Diagram 8)

...with the evil intention of 7 Nxc7, winning the rook in the corner, or 7 Bxc7, merely picking up a pawn.

The first rule is: don't panic! World champions such as Karpov, Kramnik and Kasparov have played 5...0-0 as Black, and I think one of them would have noticed if White could get away with this raid.

Actually, there is nothing wrong with 6...Na6, guarding c7, followed by 7...c5 when the white knight is out on a limb on b5. However, we can actually punish White for his premature attack:

6...dxc4!

Just letting the knight take on c7. Now 7...Nd5, guarding c5 and staying a pawn up is the threat, so let's see what happens if White accepts the offer:

7 Nxc7

Or 7 Bxc7 Bb4+ 8 Nd2 Qd7 9 Bxb8 Qxb5 10 Bf4 Rd8! and White has no way to stop 11...Rxd4 as if 11 e3 Ne4 wins a piece.

7...Bb4+!

This check is the whole point of Black's play.

8 Nd2

Or 8 Bd2 Bxd2+ and then captures the knight on c7.

8...e5!! (Diagram 9)

Gaining a vital move in the plan to overwork the bishop.

9 Bxe5

If 9 dxe5 Qxc7 10 exf6 Qxf4 wins a piece, while 9 Nxa8 exf4 leaves the knight trapped in the corner and White still facing 10...Ne4.

9...Ne4! 10 Bf4

Or else d2 drops, costing White his queen.

10...Nxd2 11 Bxd2 Bxd2+ 12 Qxd2 Qxc7 and Black has won a piece.

Of course, there might be circumstances in the latter stages of the opening or the middlegame in which the plan of Nb5 might have potency. But if Black has played

his cards right, he will have defended against this move with ...c7-c6 or, more likely, will have achieved ...c7-c5, when the c7-square won't be of special value. However, keep a watch out for tricks on c7 of all shapes and guises – remember what happened to Rubinstein!

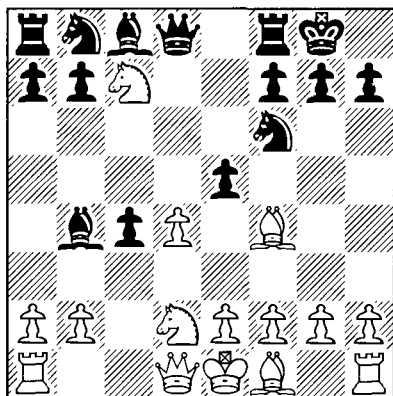


Diagram 9 (W)

Gaining a decisive tempo

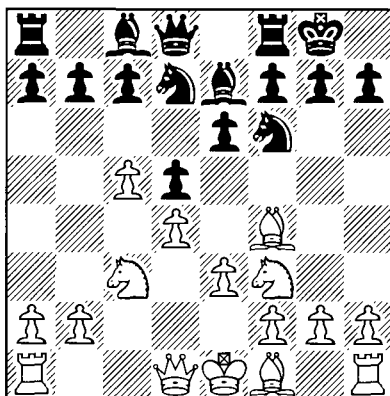


Diagram 10 (B)

Clamping down on the queenside

Various approaches for Black after 6 e3

Rather than the foolhardy 6 Nb5?, White does best to play the calm 6 e3, just continuing the development of his kingside. Then Black has an assortment of replies such as 6...Nbd7, 6...b6 and 6...c5.

White's queenside bind after 6...Nbd7

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 Nbd7

I used to think this was an OK developing move for Black, who keeps in hand the option of ...c7-c5; but recently I've realized the strength of:

7 c5! (Diagram 10)

With the white bishop on f4, the freeing advance ...e6-e5 is virtually impossible; and now, with his seventh move, White rules out the alternative ...c7-c5 as well. The plan is simply to support the c5-pawn with b4 etc. and achieve a stranglehold on the queenside. Play could continue:

7...c6

White keeps his bind after 7...Nh5 8 Bd3 Nxf4 9 exf4 c6 10 0-0 etc.

8 h3!

A useful waiting move. White sees that Black intends ...Ba6, so why waste a move with 8 Bd3 before taking on a6?

8...b6 9 b4 a5 10 a3 Ba6 (Diagram 11)

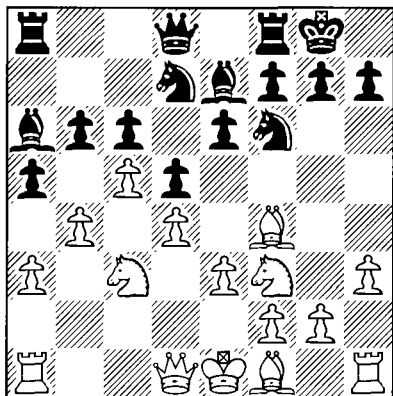


Diagram 11 (W)

Seeking relief through exchanges

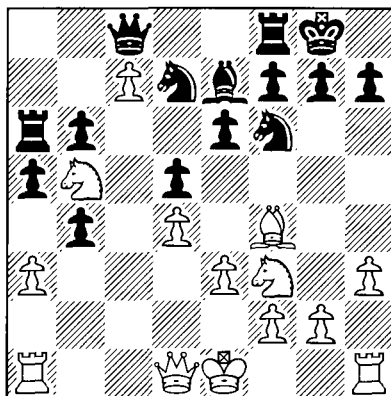


Diagram 12 (B)

The c7-pawn is a real pain

Black seeks relief through exchanging off his bad bishop, but...

11 Bxa6 Rxa6 12 b5!

Simply 12 0-0 keeps an edge, but this is a splendid pawn sacrifice to create a powerful passed pawn.

12...cxb5 13 c6 Qc8 14 c7

But not 14 cxd7? Qxc3+.

14...b4 15 Nb5 (Diagram 12)

The well-defended pawn on c7 is an eternal source of torture for Black, who lost all three recent Grandmaster games from this position, including K.Miton-R.Vaganian, Belgian League 2004. Overall, White has achieved crushing results in international chess with 7 c5!. I don't particularly trust statistics, but in my database of recent games, White wins 24, draws 22 and loses but one game! White's average Elo rating was 2498, Black's average not much lower at 2453 in these games, so we aren't talking about any huge mismatch.

Another idea for Black is 6...c6, when White could try the same plan of a queen-side bind with 7 c5!?. However, as Black has in effect renounced the plan of ...c7-c5, White can get a good position by developing in non-committal fashion: for example, 7 Qc2 Nbd7 8 Rd1 Re8 9 Be2 when Black is far from solving the problem of the bishop on c8.

Black develops in Tartakower style with 6...b6

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 b6 (Diagram 13)

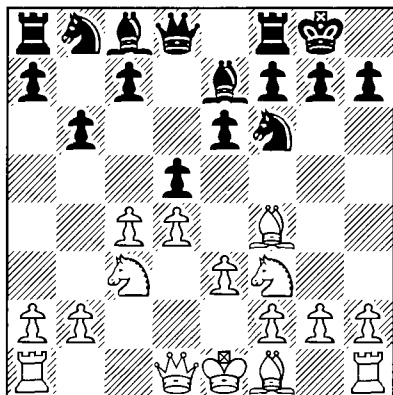


Diagram 13 (W)

Black plays 6...b6

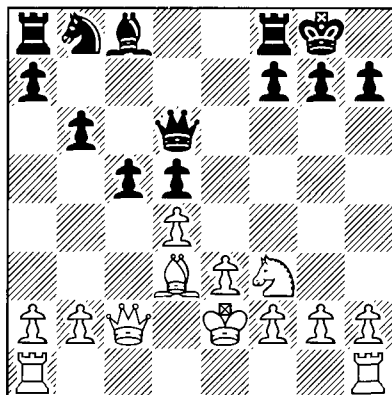


Diagram 14 (W)

Gambiting the h7-pawn

The move 6...b6 is of course double-edged, as it weakens the c7-pawn which is already under the gaze of the white bishop. In fact, Black will find himself more or less compelled to sacrifice a pawn to activate his game.

7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Nxd5

Now Black has an important choice. We shall look below at the recapture with the queen. Meanwhile, one of my own games, B.Lalic-N.McDonald, Hastings 1994/95, went:

8...exd5 9 Bd3 Bb4+!?

I thought it was a good idea to drive the white knight to a worse square or displace the white king before offering the exchange of bishops. However, I should point out that no one else in the chess world seems to like this idea much! The natural alternative was 9...c5 when Black is somewhat worse, as White can besiege the hanging pawns in the centre.

10 Ke2 Bd6 11 Bxd6 Qxd6 12 Qc2 c5!? (Diagram 14)

Gambiting the h7-pawn. As we shall see, Black will have counterplay based on ...Na6 and ...Nb4, perhaps combined with ...Ba6 and ...c5-c4. My opponent waited a move before taking the pawn.

13 Rhc1 Na6 14 Bxh7+ Kh8 15 Bd3

Or the bishop will be trapped by 15...g6.

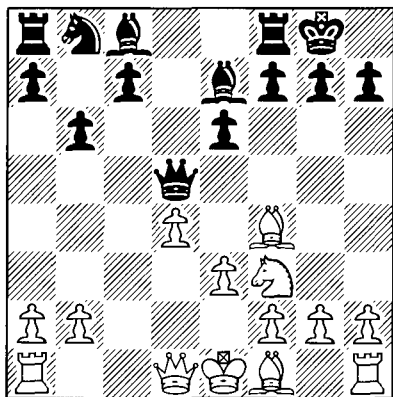
15...Nb4 16 dxc5! Qf6!

Black decided not to get involved in 16...Nxc2 17 cxd6 Nxa1 18 Ne5! (moving the knight before Black can pin it as occurs after 18 Rxa1 Bg4), and after 19 Rxa1 White has good compensation for the exchange.

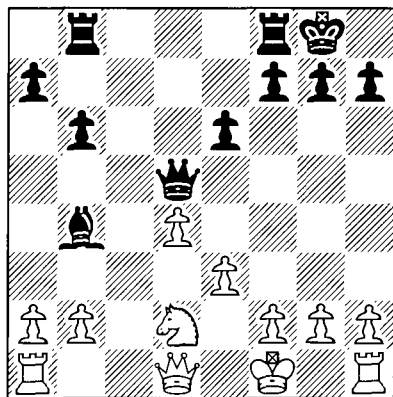
17 Qc3 Nxd3! 18 Qxd3 bxc5 ½-½

The threat of 19...Ba6 gives Black ample play for the pawn. Here we chickened out: my opponent offered a draw and I accepted it.

Returning to the position after **8 Nxd5**, the recapture **8...Qxd5!?** (**Diagram 15**) deserves attention.

**Diagram 15 (W)**

Black plays 8...Qxd5!?

**Diagram 16 (W)**

Black has good compensation

For example:

9 Bxc7?!

White has hardly ever risked taking this pawn at high level chess. In contrast 9 Bd3 has been seen a number of times. For example, 9...Qa5+!? 10 Kf1 (10 Nd2 Ba6!) 10...Ba6 11 Bxc7 Bxd3+ 12 Qxd3 Na6 13 Bg3 Nb4 14 Qb3 Rfc8 15 h3 Rc2 and Black had considerable compensation for the pawn in A.Graf-U.Bönsch, Eppingen 2005.

9...Bb4+ 10 Nd2 Ba6!?

Intending to exploit the possibility of ...Qxg2 to disrupt White's game. 10...Na6 is a serious alternative.

11 Bxb8

After 11 Bxa6 Nxa6, both c7 and g2 are hanging.

11...Bxf1 12 Kxf1 Raxb8 (Diagram 16)

And Black can double rooks along the c-file with plenty of activity for the pawn.

Energetic and best: 6...c5!

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 (Diagram 17)

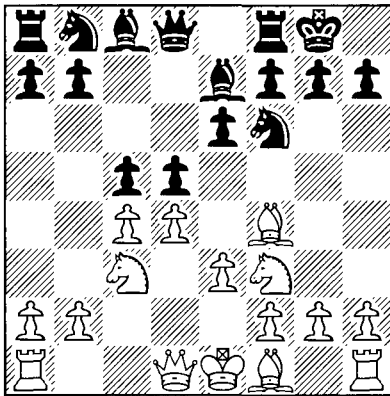


Diagram 17 (W)

The energetic 6...c5!

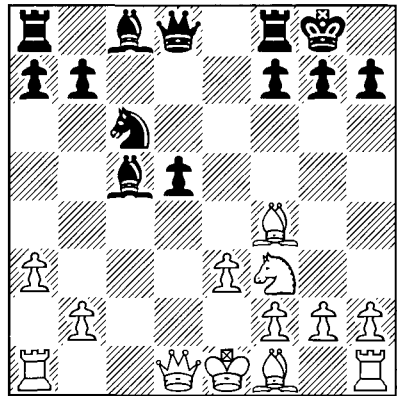


Diagram 18 (W)

Black has an IQP

Black takes the fight to his opponent with an immediate attack on the white centre. Not only is this the clear favourite of the best players in the world, it easily produces the best results for Black out of the options that have been considered here.

Jon Speelman is more concrete in his assessment of 6...c5: 'the logical reaction. Were the bishop on g5, then 7 cxd5 would be very nice for White, e.g. 7...cxd4 8 Nxd4 Nxd5 9 Bxe7 Nxe7 10 Bd3 etc. And presumably 7 dxc5 would also be excellent then. However, now ...c5 is perfectly playable.'

White gives Black an Isolated Queen's Pawn: 6...c5 7 dxc5

Still, we mustn't imagine that things will be easy for Black. White has two plans to gain the upper hand. The first is to complete his piece deployment quietly and castle kingside. Then he can go about the business of exploiting the isolated queen's pawn (IQP) that he has inflicted on d5 in the sequence:

6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 cxd5

8 a3 Nc6 9 cxd5 Nxd5 10 Nxd5 exd5 is an alternative move order.

8...Nxd5 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 a3 Nc6 (Diagram 18)

We shall analyse this variation using two recent games as a starting base.

Game 45

□ A.Aleksandrov ■ R.Kasimdzhanov

Calvia Olympiad 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 O-O 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 cxd5 Nxd5

It seems right to offer the exchange of knights rather than recapture with 8...exd5, when White might be able to get away without the a2-a3 move.

9 Nxd5 exd5 10 a3

A useful precaution, since if 10 Bd3 Bb4+ 11 Nd2 d4 looks fine for Black.

10...Nc6 11 Bd3

Now White is threatening a double attack that should be familiar to the reader: 11...Re8? 12 Bxh7+! Kxh7 13 Qc2+ Kg8 14 Qxc5 and White has won a pawn.



TIP: All the general tips on strategy in the world won't help you if you miss basic tactics of this sort. Fortunately, this is one of the easiest faults to remedy – you could, for example, work through some puzzle books, or train yourself to follow the moves from a diagram you see in a chess book without setting the position up on a board.

11...Bb6 12 O-O d4! 13 e4! (Diagram 19)

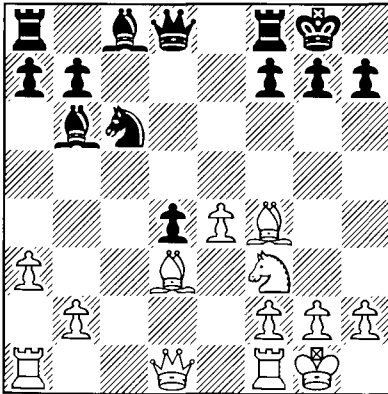


Diagram 19 (B)

Position after 13 e4!

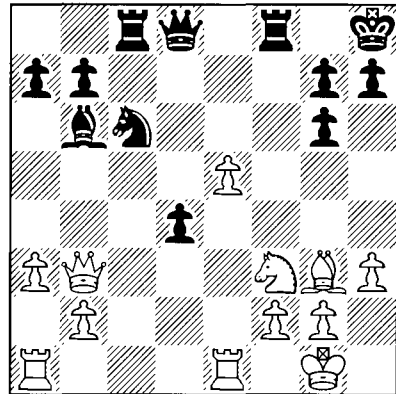


Diagram 20 (B)

Things look bad for Black

The only way White can play to win, as 13 exd4 Nxd4 is very drawish.

13...Bg4 14 h3 Bh5 15 Re1

The alternative 15 g4 is examined in the next game.

15...Rc8?

Instead Black should have fought against White's next move with 15...f6!.

16 e5!

Now White has seized a significant space advantage on the kingside.

16...Bg6 17 Bxg6 fxc6

A far from attractive way to recapture, but after 17...hxc6 18 Ng5!? Black has to reckon with 19 Qg4, intending 20 Qh4 with mate on h7, and also 19 e6.

18 Qb3+ Kh8 19 Bg3 (Diagram 20)

Now things look horrid for Black. The white passed pawn is well supported and can expand with e5-e6 at some point. Furthermore, there are ideas like Bh4 and Ng5 to worry about, when the knight threatens to invade on e6 or f7.

Meanwhile, after Rad1 next move, Black's own passed pawn is little more than dead wood.

19...d3!

Kasimdzhanov realizes he has been outplayed and that if nothing dramatic happens, his position will just get worse and worse. Therefore, being a tough fighter, the 2004 FIDE Champion decides to launch a highly ingenious counterattack. It turns out to contain a deep refutation but this was definitely the best chance of saving himself.

20 Red1!

A precise reply. The obvious 20 Rad1 allows Black to gain a vital move for his attack by hitting e1: 20...Rxf3! 21 gxf3 d2 22 Re4 Nd4 23 Qa4 (White is in trouble after 23 Qd3? Rc1!) 23...Nxf3+ with unclear play.

20...Rxf3!

There is no going back as d3 would then drop for nothing.

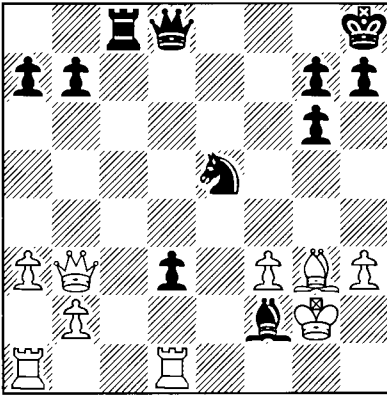
21 gxf3 Nxe5! 22 Kg2!

If 22 Bxe5 Qg5+ regains the piece with at least sufficient counterplay, e.g. 23 Kh1 (the whole point is 23 Bg3?? Qxc3+) 23...Qxe5 24 Qxd3 Qxb2 or 24...Bc7 attacking h2.

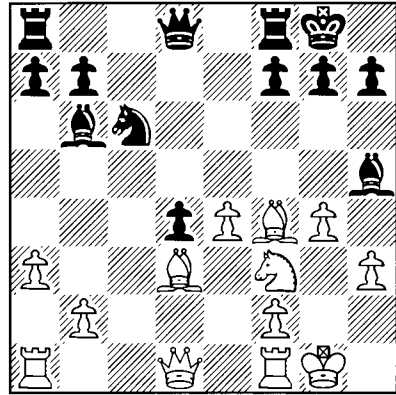
Now, however, it seems as if the black attack is about to falter, when d3 will drop and White will be the exchange up for not much compensation; but the Uzbekistani Grandmaster had one more trick up his sleeve:

22...Bxf2!? (Diagram 21) 23 Bxe5?

Up until now Aleksandrov played a perfect game, but the barrage of sacrifices finally unnerves him. The way to victory was 23 Bxf2 Qg5+ 24 Bg3 Rc2+ 25 Kf1! Qxc3. At first glance it looks as if White has to resign, but 26 Qxc2! turns the tables since 26...dxc2 27 Rd8 is mate.

**Diagram 21 (W)**

An ingenious counterattack

**Diagram 22 (B)**

Starting a kingside pawn storm

23...Qg5+ 24 Kxf2 Qxe5

White has an extra rook, but there is no way to avoid a perpetual check. In fact, he would even lose after 25 Kg2 Qg5+ 26 Kh1 Rc2! (note the black queen defends d8 and so rules out any back rank trick with Qxc2) 27 Rg1 Qd2 and White will have to give up his queen for the rook to avoid mate on h2, when the endgame is lost for him.

25 Qxd3 Qh2+ 26 Kf1 Qxh3+ 27 Kg1 Qg3+ 28 Kh1 Qh3+ ½-½

A much more exciting kind of draw than normally occurs in this variation!

Game 46□ **M.Carlsen** ■ **N.Short**

Hoogeveen 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 a3 Nc6 11 Bd3 Bb6 12 0-0 d4 13 e4 Bg4 14 h3 Bh5 15 g4!? (Diagram 22)

Rather than copy the solid 15 Re1 of the previous game, Carlsen begins a very interesting and ambitious scheme of attack.

15...Bg6 16 Nd2

Black drew fairly effortlessly in D.Navara-R.Kasimdzhanov, Calvia Olympiad 2004, after 16 Rc1 Rc8 17 Re1 f6 18 Bc4+ Bf7 19 Qd3 Bc7 20 Bxf7+ Rxf7 21 e5 Nxe5 22 Nxe5 fxe5 23 Bxe5 Bxe5 24 Rxc8 Qxc8 25 Rxe5 Qc1+ 26 Qf1 Rc7 ½-½ (but not 26...Qxb2?? 27 Re8+ and Black will be mated in two more moves).

16...f6!

A useful little move that creates both a base on e5 for the knight and an escape route for the bishop on g6, should it ever be harassed by f4-f5 or h4-h5 at a later point. The damage done to the black kingside is negligible.

John Shaw discusses this line in the context of M.Krasenkow-P.Skalik, Polish Team Championship 1999, which continued 16...Bc7?! 17 Bxc7 Qxc7 18 f4 f6 19 h4 **(Diagram 23)**

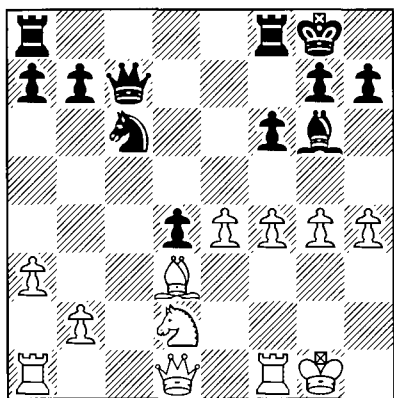


Diagram 23 (B)

The centre is static

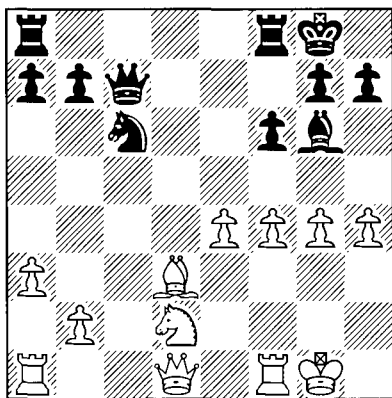


Diagram 24 (B)

But were the centre open...

I must admit that when I was browsing through *Starting Out: Queen's Gambit* and saw the diagram above, I thought that something had gone wrong at the printers – surely the white kingside pawns should have been in a line on the second rank, not the fourth?!

Actually, White can get away with advancing all his pawns because the situation in the centre is static. Try a little experiment. Remove the pawn from d4 **(Diagram 24)**, and you will see that all Black's fantasies come true:

White is now a pawn up, but he is about to be brutalized down the d-file with ...Rfd8 etc., as well as down the a7-g1 diagonal with ...Qb6+ and ...Qe3 etc. Even the black knight can rejoice at gaining the d4-square. It is very doubtful that White would be able to hold his position together – if he could, his name is likely to be Mr Fritz, Mr Junior or Mr Houdini!

Now put the pawn back on d4, and you will see that almost all Black's dynamism is smothered. In the game, Skalik played imprecisely and capped it all with a dreadful blunder: 19...Rae8 20 Qf3 h6 21 Rf2 Bh7 22 Raf1 Qe7 23 Qh3 g5? (letting the white hordes in down the f-file) 24 fxg5 fxg5 25 Bc4+ Kh8 26 Rf7 Rxf7 27 Rxf7 Qe5 28 Nf3 Qxe4 29 hxg5 Nd8 30 Qxh6 Qxg4+ 31 Kf1 1-0.

Shaw is rightly critical of 16...Bc7, as it aids White in the task of clearing the way for his f2-f4 advance. However, ...Bc7 is a good idea in that it exchanges off the bishop which is staring at a brick wall on d4. Therefore it should be made at some point; the question is of timing.

Nigel Short, an erudite Queen's Gambit player and theory junkie, plays it better.

17 Rc1 Kh8 18 Nc4 Bc7

The ...Bc7 move finally comes, but Black can be pleased to have persuaded his opponent into playing 18 Nc4 – the knight is better placed on d2, where it guards e4, and to which square it will return on move 22.

19 Bxc7 Qxc7 20 f4 Rae8 21 Qf3 Qe7 22 Rce1 Bf7 23 Nd2 g5? (Diagram 25)

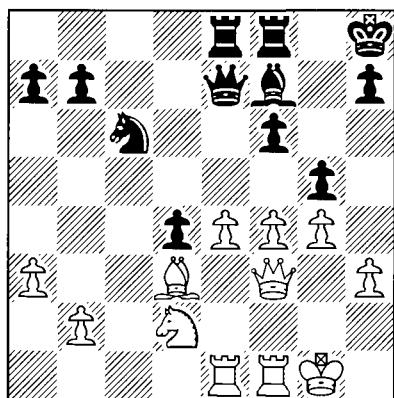


Diagram 25 (W)

Black tries for the e5-square

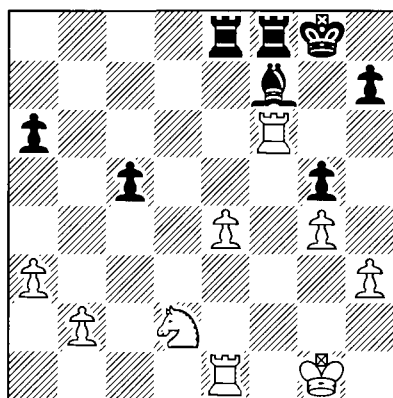


Diagram 26 (B)

Black's pawns are loose

I think that 23...a6!?, ruling out the Bb5 move and planning 24...g5, looks at least OK for Black. It might seem that certain moves and move numbers are cursed for astrological reasons, as Skalik in the game above also perished after 23...g5??.

The game move is instructive and admirable from a strategic point of view, as after 24 f5? Ne5 or 24 fxg5? fxg5 it has weakened White's dark squares and won a dominant outpost in the centre for the black knight. Unfortunately for Black, there was a fly in the ointment:

24 Bb5!

White eliminates the knight before it can reach nirvana on e5.



TIP: Unless you think it is necessary to try bluffing your opponent, the most attractive strategic idea is to be rejected if it contains a tactical flaw.

24...a6 25 Bxc6 bxc6 26 fxg5 fxg5 27 Qf6+

Carlsen is now able to exploit his opponent's loose pawns. We shall pass quickly over Black's death throes:

27...Kg8 28 Qxd4 c5 29 Qf6 Qxf6 30 Rxf6 (Diagram 26) 30...Rb8 31 Nf3 Rxb2 32 Nxc5 Ba2 33 Rxf8+ Kxf8 34 Nxe7+ Ke7 35 Ng5 c4 36 Rc1 Rb3 37 Kf2 c3 38 e5 Rxa3 39 Ne4 c2 40 Rxc2 Rxh3 41 Rc7+ Kd8 42 Ra7 Bc4 43 g5 Rh4 44 Nd6 Be6 45 g6 Rg4 46 g7 a5 47 Kf3 Rg1 48 Nb7+ Ke8 49 Nc5 Bf7 50 Ne4 Rxc7 51 Nd6+ Kf8 52 Ra8+ Ke7 53 Nf5+ Kd7 54 Ra7+ 1-0

White keeps the central tension

In the above games, White played 7 cxd5, which inflicted an IQP but also opened a diagonal for the black bishop on c8 and allowed the black rooks more freedom than usual: the king's rook could go to the semi-open e-file, while with the bishop no longer obstructing it, the queen's rook could choose between c8 and d8.

Another way for White to approach the position is to avoid, or at least delay, c4xd5. Then Black remains with a passive bishop and his rooks are also less active – especially the rook on a8 if it remains boxed in by the bishop. Because the black pieces have less mobility, White might even take the liberty of castling queenside.

Let's trace a typical sequence of moves in this sub-variation:

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Qc2

The queen takes up a strong post where she might discover an attack on the bishop on c5. She also clears the way for either Rd1 or 0-0-0.

8...Nc6

Black develops the knight in sensible style.

9 a3!

A useful move which denies the black pieces the b4-square; in particular it prevents the white queen being harassed by ...Nb4 at some point. It also supports, in some cases, a queenside expansion with b2-b4.

9...Qa5! (Diagram 27)

Shades of the Cambridge Springs. This move is a key part of Black's opening set-up. It may look odd to put the queen on a square where she is in danger of a b2-b4 fork (though not immediately since 10 b4? just drops a pawn to 10...Nxb4 or 10...Bxb4), or can be attacked by the manoeuvre Nd2 and Nb3. However, Black is always looking for an active square for his queen in the Queen's Gambit, and this fits the bill as it:

- 1) Pins the knight on c3 and so takes some of the pressure off the d5-pawn.

2) Evacuates the queen from d8, and so stops a pin with Rd1. (Incidentally, after 10 Nd2, Black has even tried 10...Qd8!? just returning home with the queen, as the Rd1 pin is no longer on, and the white knight is worse placed on d2 than f3. 11 Nf3 Qa5 etc. could then lead to a bizarre draw by repetition!)

3) Prevents the space-gaining b2-b4 move by pinning the a3-pawn.

Nevertheless, Black has to be a little careful. A normally vital follow-up to 9...Qa5 is the retreat ...Be7!, just getting the bishop out of the way of attack by b2-b4 or Nd2 and Nb3.

10 0-0-0!? (Diagram 28)

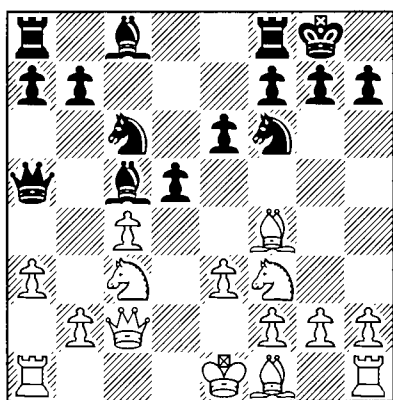


Diagram 27 (B)

Position after 9...Qa5!

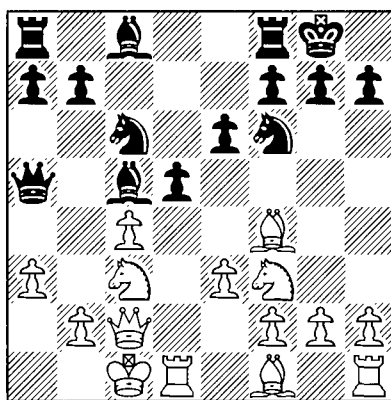


Diagram 28 (B)

Startling castling

A very aggressive stance indeed. The important alternative 10 Rd1 is also analysed below, but first let's see how queenside castling turned out in a couple of illustrative games.

White goes for the kill with 10 0-0-0

Game 47

□ R.Kaufman ■ B.Lengyel

Balatonlelle 2006

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Qc2 Nc6 9 a3 Qa5 10 0-0-0!?

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

Castling queenside caused a tremendous stir when it was introduced at the 1988 USSR Championship in the game M.Gurevich-A.Sokolov. Or more exactly, I should say it gradually filtered through to the chess public that a great new idea had been born. In those days there was no Internet, so any keen theory buff had to wait until the games of a big tournament appeared in a magazine a week or so later. Thus it was, for example, that Jonathan Speelman was able to use the 10 0-0-0! novelty to win what was effectively the decisive game of his Candidates quarter final match against Nigel Short a few days after the Gurevich game was played: his trainer had stumbled across the novelty in an obscure chess magazine and the Speelman camp analysed it in detail. In contrast, Short knew nothing about the new move, reacted with shock, and was easily beaten.

Well, if 10 0-0-0 crushed Nigel Short, I think we had better prepare for it carefully.

10...Be7

By no means the only move. 10...Bd7 or 10...Rd8 both give Black reasonable chances, while 10...dxc4 11 Bxc4 Be7 12 g4 e5 would transpose to the main game.

11 g4!?

White makes no bones about it: he intends to mate the black king. Other moves are considered in the next game below.

11...dxc4!?

So that if 12 g5 Nd5. White therefore develops his bishop and increases his control over the d5-square.

12 Bxc4

Even so, there would be rich pickings for a black rook if it managed to get to c8: there are no less than three white pieces lined up in a row on the c-file in front of their king. Most uncomfortable of these is the queen, which always fears the dreaded word 'pin'.

12...e5

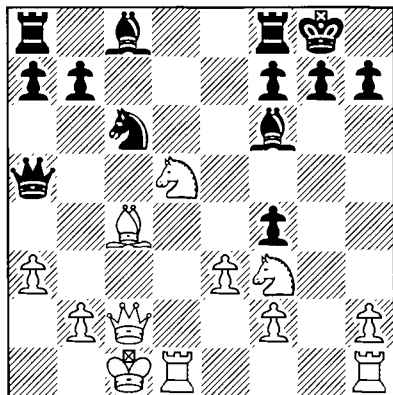
A double-edged move since, as well as attacking f4 and clearing the way for the light-squared bishop to enter the game, Black is loosening his hold of the d5-square and increasing the scope of the white bishop on c4. In such situations, judgements of a purely positional nature tend to go out of the window. Only through concrete analysis and knowledge of what has happened in previous games can we hope to come to a true evaluation of a move.

13 g5!

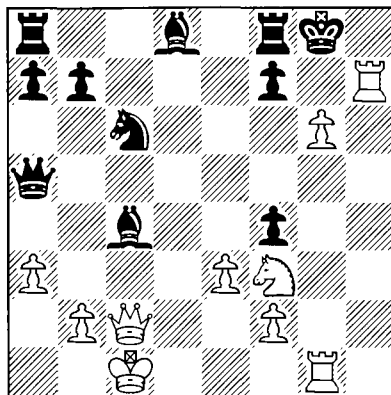
White must lose no time in pursuing his attack, as 13 Bg3? Bxg4 looks excellent for Black.

13...exf4 14 gxf6 Bxf6 15 Nd5! (Diagram 29)

A critical moment. How can Black best meet the threats to his king, whilst at the same time keeping scope for counterplay?

**Diagram 29 (B)**

A critical moment

**Diagram 30 (B)**

Black resigned

15...Bd8?

Black doesn't want his kingside ripped apart by 16 Nxf6+ gxf6, but this is hardly the way to stem the tide of White's attack. He had to play the cold blooded 15...Ne7!, when the black knight:

- 1) Challenges White's dominant knight on d5.
- 2) Begins to clear the c-file for counterplay with ...Rac8 against the white pieces which are lined up in a convenient row.
- 3) Supports the ...Bf5 move, both to complete the clearance of the c-file and bolster the kingside defences with gain of time by hitting the white queen.
- 4) Is ready to go to g6 as necessary to block the g-file.

The drawbacks? The black king's pawn defences are undoubtedly weakened after 16 Nxf6 gxf6. The g-file is forcibly opened and there is no longer the ...g7-g6 move to block an attack on h7. On the other hand, after seeing what happens to Lengyel, it will be appreciated that *rapid development of the pieces and counterplay along the c-file is of more importance to Black than a neat row of pawns in front of his king.*

White hasn't been able to demonstrate any meaningful advantage after 15...Ne7! 16 Nxf6 gxf6, though the play is very complex. Two examples are:

a) 17 Nd4 fxe3 18 fxe3 Bf5 19 Nxf5 Qxf5 20 Bd3 Qh3 with unclear play in which Black came out on top in G.Dizdar-A.Beliavsky, Bled 1998.

b) 17 Rhg1+ Kh8 18 Nd4 (or 18 e4 b5! with counterplay) 18...fxe3 19 fxe3 Bf5 20 Nxf5 Qxf5 21 Bd3 Qe5 22 Kb1 (no time to take on h7 because of death on the c-file)

22...f5 and Black had nothing to fear in as in V.Akopian-E.Pigusov, Tilburg 1994. You will have noticed the importance of the ...Bf5 move, and also Black's willingness to exchange queens. His pawn structure may look ragged, but remember he normally enters the endgame a pawn up, and even if he doesn't, White's pawns (especially e3) usually prove just as weak.

16 h4

Now Black has to reckon with 17 Ng5 attacking h7.

16...g6 17 Rdg1

Putting pressure on the g-file and stopping Black getting any counterplay with 17...Bf5? because of 18 Qxf5.

17...Be6 18 h5! Bxd5

The kingside was beyond redemption.

19 hxg6 Bxc4

If 19...Bxf3 20 gxf7+ and mate next move.

20 Rxh7 1-0 (Diagram 30)

The threat of 21 gxf7 with double, discovered checkmate decides the game, for if 20...f5 21 Qxc4+ and mate in two.

Game 48

□ **G.Bicchierai** ■ **A.Barsov**

Calvi 2004

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Qc2 Nc6 9 a3 Qa5 10 0-0-0 Be7 11 h4!? (Diagram 31)

As espoused by Kasparov.

Besides 11 g4 in the previous game above, Black also has to be ready for the simple 11 Kb1 which takes a time out to get the king off the dodgy file. However, after 11...Rd8 12 Nd2 dxc4 13 Bxc4 Qf5! (Black reassigns the queen to a square where she helps bolster the kingside; and this comes with gain of time as White has no wish to exchange queens) 14 Nde4 Rxd1+ 15 Rxd1 Nxe4 16 Nxe4 e5 17 Bg3 Be6 Black was doing well in L.Van Wely-P.Van der Sterren, Wijk aan Zee 1998.



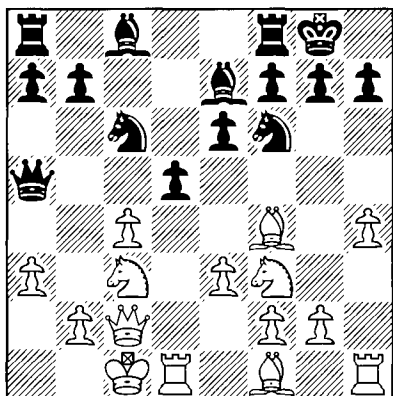
WARNING: You always have to watch out for tactics in this type of position. In the line above, after 11 Kb1 Rd8 12 Nd2, Anatoly Karpov once played 12...Qb6?? which, on the face of it, seems a decent move as 13...Bxa3 is threatened. However, after 13 c5! Qxc5 (or 13...Bxc5 14 Na4 winning a piece cleanly) 14 Nb3, the former World Champion suddenly realized his queen would be trapped on 14...Qb6 15 Na4!. He battled on hopelessly with 14...Nb4 15 axb4 Qxb4 in V.Topalov-A.Karpov, Monte Carlo (rapid) 1998.

11...a6!?

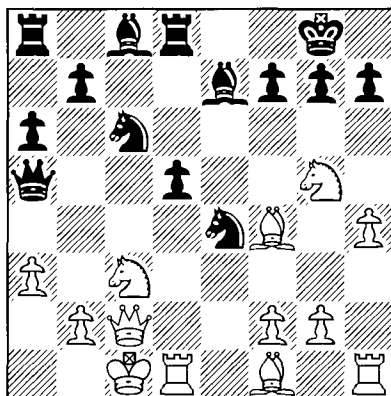
A calm reply which intends counterplay after 12...dxc4 and 13...b5.

12 cxd5 exd5 13 Ng5 Rd8!

Meeting the threat of 14 Nxd5!, when 14...Nxd5 15 Qxh7 would be mate.

14 e4 Nxe4! (Diagram 32) 15 Rxd5?**Diagram 31 (B)**

Kasparov's 11 h4!?

**Diagram 32 (W)**

Exchanging off the attackers

This should lose quickly. If 15 Ngxe4 Bf5! is a strong riposte as 16 Nf6+ Bxf6 17 Qxf5 Bxc3 18 bxc3 Qxa3+ gives Black a huge attack for the piece. White had to play 15 Nxe4, when after 15...dxe4 16 Bc4 (16 Rxd8+ Nxd8!) 16...Bxg5 17 hxg5 Rxd1+ 18 Rxd1 Qf5 19 g3 Be6 Black is doing fine, but the battle continues.

15...Rxd5 16 Qxe4 Rxc5?

Black missed an elegant way to force decisive simplification: 16...Qxc3+! 17 bxc3 Bxa3+ 18 Kc2 Bf5 and wins.

17 hxg5 Bf5 18 Qd5 Rc8! 19 g4 Bg6 20 Qxa5 Nxa5 (Diagram 33)

Despite his lapse at move 16, Black still has a strong initiative in the endgame. He ground down his opponent as follows:

21 Rh3 Nb3+ 22 Kd1 Rd8+ 23 Ke1 Nd4 24 Bc4 Nc2+ 25 Kf1 Rd4 26 Nd5 Bc5 27 Ba2 Rd1+ 28 Ke2 Ra1 29 Rc3 Nd4+ 30 Kd2 Rxa2 31 Bd6 Rxb2+ 32 Kc1 Ne2+ 33 Kxb2 Nxc3 34 Ne7+ Kh8 35 Bxc5 Na4+ 36 Kb3 Nxc5+ 37 Kc4 Ne6 0-1

The variations above might all seem rather frightening for Black, but personally I find it more scary defending an endgame with an IQP! As long as Black knows a bit of theory, he has exciting counterchances against the white king on c1. This is reflected in the fact that castling queenside is at the time of writing rather unfashionable at international level.

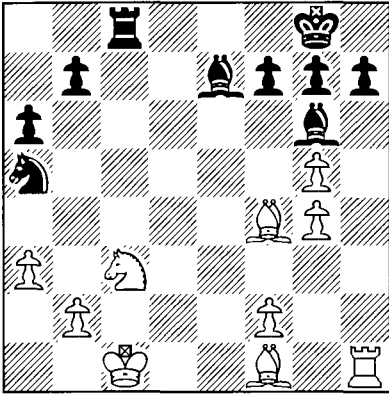


Diagram 33 (W)
Black has the initiative

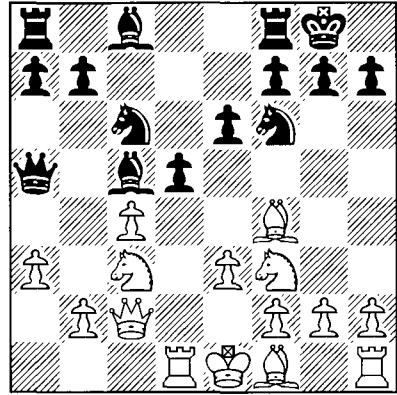


Diagram 34 (B)
White plays 10 Rd1

White plays the more positional 10 Rd1

6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Qc2 Nc6 9 a3 Qa5 10 Rd1 (Diagram 34)

The alternative 10 Rd1 may look simpler, but it can also lead to hair-raising complications. Just check out the following pair of games.

Game 49

□ Y.Seirawan ■ N.Short

Amsterdam 1992

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Qc2

You will better understand the drastic outcome of this game if you bear in mind that White has delayed the development of his kingside. It is with the noble aim of exerting immediate pressure on the c- and d-files, and perhaps winning material. However, White is leaving himself open to a snap defeat if he cannot control the dynamism of the black pieces. It's never easy playing a middlegame with your king in the middle of the board and a couple of pieces doing little or nothing!

8...Nc6 9 a3

Incidentally, White can also try to get by without this move: 9 Rd1 Qa5 10 Be2!?, just developing and keeping Black under slight, but annoying pressure. Perhaps 10...Bb4 is the best way to try to shake it off.

9...Qa5 10 Rd1

This position can also occur via a Nimzo-Indian, viz. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 c5 5 dxc5 0-0 6 Nf3 Nc6 7 Bf4 Bxc5 8 e3 d5 9 Rd1 Qa5 10 a3.

Two other lines deserve a mention:

Firstly, 10 Nd2 Be7! 11 Bg3 (the white bishop gets out of the way of the ...e7-e5 advance) 11...Bd7 12 Be2 Rfc8! (putting the rook on the active c-file before retreating the queen) 13 0-0 Qd8 14 Rad1 Na5 (forcing White to hand over the d5-square) 15 cxd5 Nxd5 and Black was solid in J.Lautier-A.Beliavsky, German League 2002.

Another plan is 9 Rc1 a6 (**Diagram 35**)

If now 10 b4 Bd6 11 Bg5 a5! 12 b5 Ne7 13 Bxf6 gxf6 and the threat of ...Bxa3 is more important than anything happening on the kingside. After 14 a4 Bb4 Black had active play in P.Nielsen-G.Kasparov, Reykjavik (rapid) 2004.

Or 10 cxd5 exd5 and Black is ready to equalize with ...d5-d4; for example 11 Bd3 Ba7 (here we see the value of Black's ninth move) followed by 12...d4. It looks as if White can win a pawn with 11 Nxd5 Nxd5 12 Rxc5, but then it is Black's turn to speak: 12...Nxf4 13 Qxd8 (not 13 exf4?? Qe7+ picking up the rook) 13...Nxc7+! 14 Bxc2 Rxd8 and Black has no problems.

10...Be7

The bishop retires before it can be attacked with 11 b4.

11 Nd2

With the idea of 12 Nb3, driving away the black queen and then feasting on the d5-pawn. On the other hand, White has temporarily loosened his grip on e5, and this gives Black his chance:

11...e5! (Diagram 36)

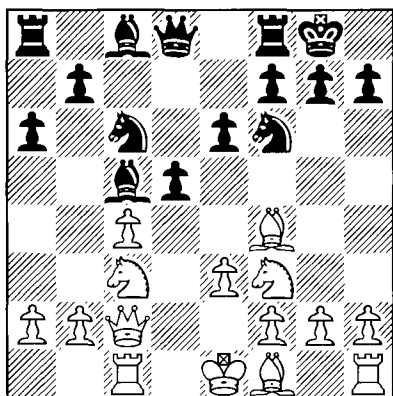


Diagram 35 (W)

Position after 9 Rc1 a6

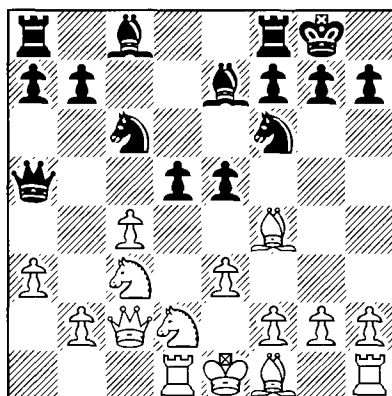


Diagram 36 (W)

The black centre expands

The black pawn centre trundles forwards. Will it crush the only partially developed white army, or just fall to pieces, losing material?

12 Nb3

We shall investigate 12 Bg5 in the next game.

12...Qb6 13 Bg5 Be6?

Not the best move in this massively imbalanced position. 13...Bg4! is better, provoking a weakness on e3. For example 14 f3 Be6 15 Na4 Qc7 16 Bxf6 dxc4! (it is necessary to counterattack against b3 in order to avoid a fork on d5) 17 Bxc4 Bxc4 18 Qxc4 Bxf6 19 Nbc5 Rfd8 20 Rxd8+ Rxd8 21 Ne4 Bh4+! 22 g3 Be7 and having loosened the white kingside, Black stood well in J.Piket-V.Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo (rapid) 1997.

14 Na4 Qa6! 15 cxd5?

In fact 15 Nac5! looks very good for White

15...Qxa4 16 Bxf6 Nb4!! (Diagram 37)

Wonderful play by one of the heroes of the Queen's Gambit Declined.

17 Qe4

Or 17 axb4 Bxb4+ 18 Ke2 Rac8 19 Qd3 Bd7 (threatening 20...b5) 20 Kf3 (or 20 Ra1 e4!) 20...Be7! with a crushing game.

17...Rac8 18 axb4 Bxb4+ 19 Ke2 Qxb3 20 Bxe5 Rc4 21 Rd4 Rxd4 22 Qxd4 Bxd5 0-1

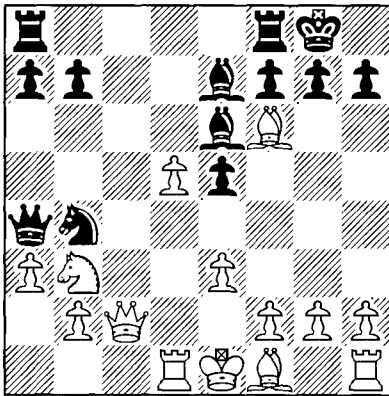


Diagram 37 (W)

A startling counterblow

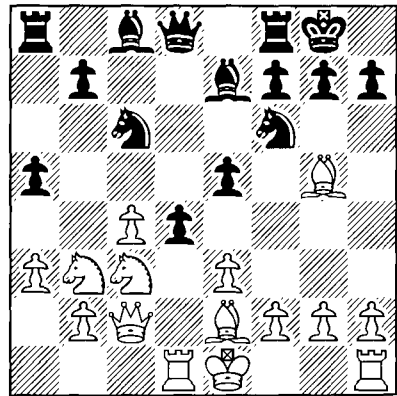


Diagram 38 (W)

A disruptive thrust

Game 50□ **B.Alterman** ■ **G.Kasparov**Tel Aviv (clock simul) 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Be7 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 a3 Nc6 9 Qc2 Qa5 10 Rd1 Be7 11 Nd2 e5! 12 Bg5

Rather than 12 Nb3, as in the Short game above.

12...d4

Again the black pawns look impressive, but are they about to disintegrate under the hammer blows of the white pieces?

13 Nb3 Qd8!

Not allowing White to consolidate after 13...Qb6 14 Bxf6 Bxf6 15 Nd5.

14 Be2 a5! (Diagram 38)

A vital move. Just when it seemed White was going to overrun the centre, the rook's pawn comes to Black's rescue.

15 Na4

The point is that Black has a strong initiative for a pawn after 15 exd4 a4! 16 Nxa4 (not 16 dxe5 axb3 17 Rxd8 bxc2 which is excellent for Black) 16...Nxd4 17 Nxd4 exd4 etc.

15...g6 16 Bxf6

If instead 16 Bxd4 Bf5 17 Qc1 Nxd4 gives Black the kind of active play Kasparov is looking for.

16...Bxf6 17 c5

Alterman is trying for a blockade of the queenside, but meanwhile his ingenious opponent is injecting ever greater dynamism into the black pieces.

17...Be6 18 e4

An admission that he has failed in his principal aim of breaking the black centre.

18...Qe8 19 Nb6 a4! 20 Nd2 Ra5 21 Bd3

Not 21 Nxa4 d3! 22 Bxd3 Nd4 winning a piece.

21...Be7 (Diagram 39)

Now in view of the weakness of c5, White can only avoid losing a pawn by agreeing to a sequence of moves that leaves him with split pawns on the queenside.

22 Nxa4 Nb8! 23 b3 Bxb3! 24 Nxb3 Rxa4 25 Ra1 Qc6 26 0-0 Nd7 27 Qe2 Nxc5!

Finally the weak c5-pawn drops, as 28 Bb5 fails to 28...d3!.

28 Rfc1 Ra7 29 Nxc5 Bxc5 30 a4 Qd6 (Diagram 40)

There is nothing amusing about being a passed pawn down against Kasparov,

Starting Out: Queen's Gambit Declined

even with opposite-coloured bishops.

31 Qa2 b6 32 Qb3 Kg7 33 Ra2 Ra5 34 Rd1 h5 35 Re2 h4 36 Bb5 Ra7 37 Qd3 Qe6 38 Bc4 Qg4 39 Bb5 Bb4 40 h3 Qg5 41 Rc2 Bc3 42 Qf3 Rc8 43 Rb1 Rc5 44 Kh2 Rac7 45 Bd3 Ba5 46 Rxc5 Rxc5 47 Rb5 Rc1 48 Rd5

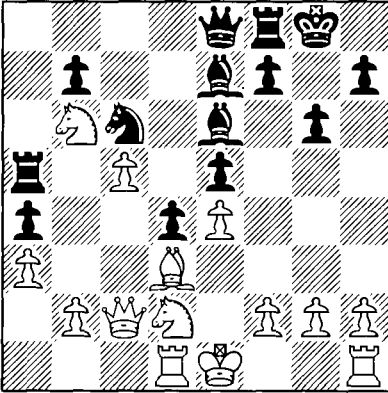


Diagram 39 (W)

The c5-pawn is weak

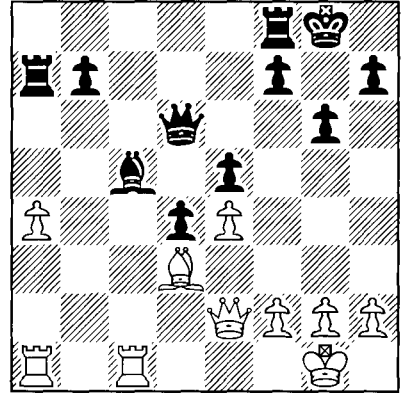


Diagram 40 (W)

White is a pawn down

At long last it looks as though White might get some real activity with 49 Rd7, but as usual the then World Champion has it all worked out.

48...Bd2! 49 g3

Or else 49...Bf4+ is lethal.

49...hxg3+ 50 fxg3 Be1! 0-1

The finish might be 51 Rd7 Bxg3+! 52 Qxg3 Rh1+ 53 Kg2 Rg1+ winning the queen.

Index of Variations

Chapter 2: Tartakower's Defence

- 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3**
5 Nf3 0-0 6 Qc2 h6 7 Bxf6 Bxf6 – *Game 16*
- 5...0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bh4**
7 Bxf6 – *Game 17*
- 7...b6 8 Rc1**
8 Bd3 – *Game 15*
8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 Nxd5 exd5
11 Be2 – *Game 11*
11 Rc1 – *Game 12*
8 Be2 Bb7 9 Bxf6 Bxf6 10 cxd5 exd5
11 0-0 – *Game 13*
11 b4 – *Game 14*
- 8...Bb7 9 cxd5 Nxd5 10 Nxd5 exd5** – *Game 9*
10...Bxd5 – *Game 10*

Chapter 3: Lasker's Defence

- 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 h6 7 Bh4 Ne4 8 Bxe7 Qxe7 9 Rc1**
9 cxd5 – *Game 18*
- 9...c6 10 Bd3 Nxc3 11 Rxc3 dxc4 12 Bxc4 Nd7 13 0-0 b6** – *Game 20*
13...c5 – *Game 19*

Chapter 4: The Classical Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nbd7 7 Rc1

7 Qc2

7...h6 – *Game 23*

7...c5 8 0-0-0

8...b6 – *Game 22*

8...cxd4 – *Game 21*

7...c6

7...a6 – *Game 24*

8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nd5 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 0-0 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5 13 Bb3

13 dxe5 – *Game 25*

13...e4 14 Nd2 Nf6 15 Qb1 – *Game 26*

15 Qc2 – *Game 27*; 15 Rc5 – *Game 28*

Chapter 5: The Cambridge Springs Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Nbd7 5 e3 c6 6 Nf3 Qa5 7 Nd2

7 cxd5 – *Game 31*

7...Bb4 8 Qc2 0-0 – *Game 29*

8...Ne4 – *Game 30*

Chapter 6: Exchange Variation

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6

3...Be7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bf4 – *Game 43*

4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5

5 Nf3 c6 6 Qc2 Na6 – *Game 35*

5...c6 6 Qc2

6 e3 Be7 7 Bd3 Nbd7 8 Nf3 Nh5 – *Game 36*

6 Nf3 Be7 7 e3 Bf5 – *Game 37*

6...Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 Nbd7 9 Nge2

9 Nf3 Re8

10 h3 Nf8 11 0-0-0 – *Game 41*

10 0-0 – *Game 34*

9...Re8 10 0-0

10 h3 Nf8 11 0-0-0 – *Game 42*

10...Nf8 11 f3 – *Game 39*

11 Rab1 – *Game 38*

Chapter 7: White plays Bf4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3

4 Bf4 – *Game 44*

4...Be7 5 Bf4 0-0 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Qc2

8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 a3 Nc6 11 Bd3 Bb6 12 0-0 d4 13 e4 Bg4 14 h3 Bh5

15 g4 – *Game 46*

15 Re1 – *Game 45*

8...Nc6 9 a3 Qa5 10 0-0-0

10 Rd1 Be7 11 Nd2 e5

12 Nb3 – *Game 49*

12 Bg5 – *Game 50*

10...Be7 11 g4 – *Game 47*

11 h4 – *Game 48*

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