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# GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

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**Eric Schiller**

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*Eric Schiller, author of more than 75 chess books, and the world's leading writer on chess openings, is widely considered one of the foremost chess analysts, writers and teachers. He is a National and Life Master, an International Arbiter of F.I.D.E., and the official trainer for many of America's top young players.*

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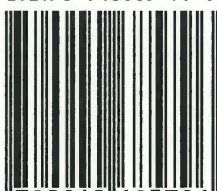
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Eric Schiller, widely considered one of the world's foremost chess analysts, writers and teachers, is internationally recognized for his definitive works on openings. He is the author of more than 75 chess books including definitive studies of many chess openings and more than two dozen USCF (United States Chess Federation) best-sellers.

His major works include the prestigious *Batsford Chess Openings* with World Champion Garry Kasparov and Grandmaster Raymond Keene, and Cardoza Publishing's definitive series on openings, *World Champion Openings*, *Standard Chess Openings*, and *Unorthodox Chess Openings* – an exhaustive and complete opening library of more than 1700 pages! He's also the author of *Gambit Opening Repertoire for White*, *Gambit Opening Repertoire for Black*, and multiple other chess titles for Cardoza Publishing. (For updated listings of all chess titles published by Cardoza Publishing, go online to [www.cardozapub.com](http://www.cardozapub.com), or for a complete listing of the author's books, to Eric Schiller's web site: [www.chessworks.com](http://www.chessworks.com))

Eric Schiller is a National and Life Master, an International Arbiter of F.I.D.E., winner of three state titles (California, Illinois, and Hawaii), and the official trainer for many of America's top young players. In 1996, he coached America's best players under 18 at the Chess World Championships. He has also presided over world championship matches, and runs prestigious international tournaments. His games have been featured in leading media including the venerable New York Times.

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# **GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK**

**Eric Schiller**

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*To all those who play chess for fun, for sport and for art!*

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# INTRODUCTION

If you like exciting no-holds-barred chess as Black, this powerful and versatile gambit repertoire will show you how to take charge with aggressive attacking defenses against any orthodox White opening. You'll see how sacrificing a bit of material, usually a single pawn, will bring you rapid development, control of the center, and open lines to use for your attack.

The gambits I'll show you are great for those games in which a win for Black is absolutely essential. The cornerstone of our war chest is a combination of the Schara Gambit, which I have played successfully for almost 25 years, and the newly rehabilitated Portuguese and Icelandic Gambits in the Scandinavian Defense. These are exciting openings which lead to bloody battles. This take-no-prisoners approach is not for the fainthearted, but for an ambitious player, they are effective at all levels of play, from beginner to professional.

I've also included lines you can play against those wimps who steadfastly refuse to accept gambits. Although these lines do not involve the sacrifice of material, they nevertheless lead to complex positions with great scope for originality. You can use the openings in this book to get the kind of positions you like to play, always keeping some pressure on the enemy.

Whether White opens 1.e4, 1.d4, 1.c4, or comes at us with flank and unorthodox moves, we'll be prepared to seize the initiative right from our opponent's hands and send White to early defeat. It will be White that responds to *our* moves and *our* attacks, and White that hangs on for dear life against the force of our play.

The opening repertoire presented here is based on gambits seen even on the top boards of important international competitions and are sound enough so that at worst, White may obtain a small positional advantage. But that is only with perfect play.

Recently, I used these very same openings with about a 70% win rate against higher rated opposition! That would be a good result as White, but as Black it is tremendous. And with this book in hand, you too can take down better players and strike fear into the heart of your opponents when you're playing Black.

Let White beware!

# THE BLACK GAMBIT

While playing a gambit repertoire as White requires some courage, adopting gambits as Black requires heroic determination, fearlessness, confidence and even a touch of recklessness. But the rewards are great, as you watch the enemy king flee for cover only to be hunted down by your relentless forces. With the openings provided in this book you can take up the challenge and enter the battle. May your king always be the last one standing!

Generally, the privilege of offering a gambit belongs to White, who has the advantage of the first move. White can more easily afford the luxury of giving up a pawn, because the momentum gained by the sacrifice is helped along by the right to move first. Giving up some material for space, tempo, or other intangible advantages, is known as “compensation” and the merit of a gambit is determined by how much compensation is received for the material.

As Black, gambit play is riskier. Since White tends to lead in development, the compensation is reduced. Sometimes a gambit as Black copies an idea used by White, but with one less tempo, but these are almost always doomed to result in an inferior position. Other gambits, such as those seen in this book, are more original in spirit and turn out to be more effective.

Trading material for compensation is the trade-off a gambiteer makes in every game. Our opponents suffer tremendous pressure, even when they have an extra pawn or two. Usually, especially if they are amateurs, they will crack. Even professional players and famous theoreticians sometimes stumble when confronted with a gambit. Computers, unable to feel the heat, calmly calculate and usually can get through the opening unscathed. Sometimes, however, the long-term complications elude them. They tend not to appreciate positional compensation, such as forcing their king to f8 and locking in the rook at h8.

Gambits may be accepted or declined. In accepting a gambit, the defender is prepared for a long defensive struggle, after which the extra material may be exploited in an endgame. Declining a gambit is safer, but it is usually the case that a positional price is paid and the

## GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

opponent will get a promising position anyway.

The term “gambit” has been used for chess since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Ruy Lopez, best known for the ultra-orthodox Spanish Game. It comes from the Italian word *gambetto* which was used for a tricky maneuver in wrestling, basically tripping the opponent. It has entered our mainstream language with a meaning of a devious move used to open a game. Actually, there is nothing subtle about a gambit—it is a straightforward attempt to smash the enemy position.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was filled with gambit play, which was part of the repertoire of most of the great players of the time, including Anderssen and Morphy. This was not simply a result of aggressive intentions on the part of the players, but because defensive technique was weak or non-existent. Because defenders had a hard time coping with threats, fans of gambits (“gambiteers”) were able to score many victories. This led to a high reputation for gambit openings such as the King’s Gambit (1.e4 e5; 2.f4.) and Evans Gambit (1.e4 e5; 2.Nf3 Nc6 ; 3.Bc4 Bc5; 4.b4).

One factor which played a major role was the social obligation to accept gambits. Declining was considered a dishonorable act of cowardice. Modern thinking attaches no stigma to declining a gambit. Indeed, many gambits should be declined because it is too dangerous to accept them, or declining leads to such a good position that there is no reason not to.

Although gambits play only a minor role in the professional ranks, for most chessplayers they remain the most popular of openings. They are fun to play and even a novice can sometimes produce an impressive attack or combination by using them. The enduring appeal of the gambit openings has not diminished in the age of the computer, either. Machines have a difficult time correctly evaluating compensation, and often underestimate a gambit.

Try out the openings you learn here in your games and keep pounding away at the enemy position. The battles will be bloody and draws will be rare. Play your games with a concentration on the weaknesses in the enemy position. Don’t worry about regaining your material too quickly, but at the same time don’t avoid positions where you recapture your investment while maintaining a superior position. Keep some open files for your rooks, point your bishops and knights in the right direction, and make sure your king is safe and your queen can join the fight quickly. You may well find that the enemy king falls into your hands before the opening is over!

# OVERVIEW OF THE REPERTOIRE

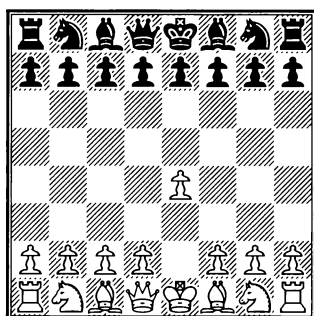
Building a gambit repertoire for Black requires great care. Many Black gambits are simply unsound, failing to deliver on their lofty promises. Yet there are good plans which can be used to create an intimidating and effective opening repertoire.

In this book you will learn how to adopt effective gambits against the major openings by White, 1.e4 and 1.d4. The strategies presented here have been tested in the tournament arena and are used by many strong players including professional grandmasters. You will even find examples played by the World Champions!

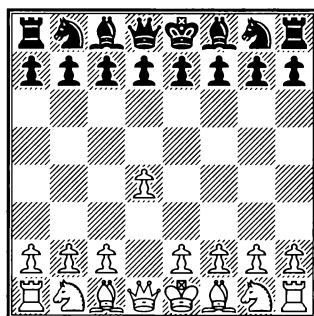
You must understand one thing at the start, however. Gambits are not appropriate against every possible move by White. You cannot expect your opponent to cooperate with your plans. An offer of material need not be accepted, and will often be politely declined. After all, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink!

Gambit play as Black is most effective when White occupies the center with pawns. Although there are gambits that have been seen against moves other than 1.e4 and 1.d4, they are not particularly effective. If you insist on using gambits at all times, you can try some of the odd plans described in *Unorthodox Chess Openings*, a book dedicated to offbeat ideas. In the last chapters of this book you can find some gambit ideas for use against flank openings.

Our main focus, however, is on countering the two most popular openings. Let's get to this now.



1.e4



1.d4

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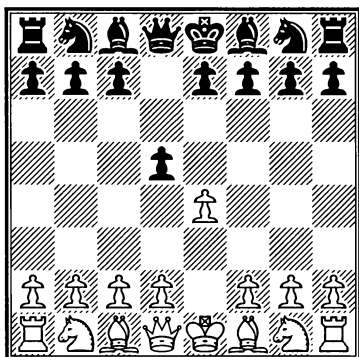
## GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

### REPLIES AGAINST KING PAWN OPENINGS

When White opens 1.e4, the **King Pawn Openings**, we will draw from our repertoire of the following gambits.

#### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE

Against 1.e4 we begin with 1...d5, the **Scandinavian Defense**.



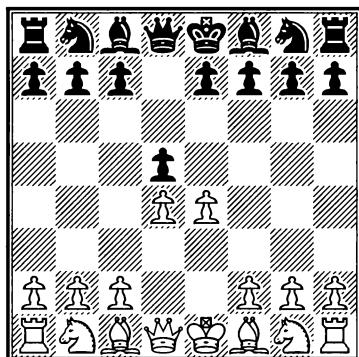
#### *Scandinavian Defense*

1.e4 d5

This very old opening did not achieve respectability until recently. After Viswanathan Anand used it in his PCA World Championship challenge against Garry Kasparov, it was revived on chessboards all over the world. Not everyone adopts the gambit approach we will follow, but the Scandinavian has other appealing features too. For example, the opening is highly confrontational. The White pawn at e4 is under siege and must either capture at d5, advance to e5, or find some form of support.

#### Scandinavian Defense - Anti-Blackmar-Diemer Gambit

Of course, White can choose to gambit the pawn, and we'll look at that strategy in **Scandinavian Defense - Anti-BDG**.



#### *Anti Blackmar-Diemer Gambit*

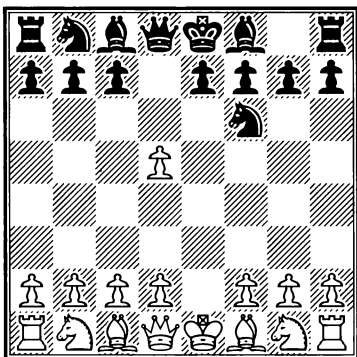
1.e4 d5  
2.d4

### Scandinavian Defense - Declined

Other methods of declining our offer are presented in the **Scandinavian Defense - Declined** chapter.

### Portuguese Variation

Most of the time, White captures 2...exd5. Black can then recapture immediately with 2...Qxd5, which is the normal handling of the opening. We'll let the pawn stand as a gambit, and play 2...Nf6 instead, the **Portuguese Variation**.



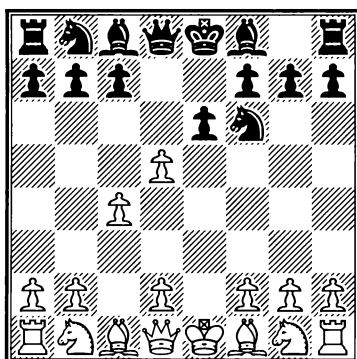
#### *Portuguese Variation*

- 1.e4 d5
- 2.exd5 Nf6

There is no rush to recapture the pawn. Black attacks d5 with two pieces, queen and knight, and therefore the only way that White can try to hang on to it is by playing 3.c4, but then we can adopt the strong Icelandic Gambit with 3...e6.

### Icelandic Gambit

The pawn move puts additional pressure on d5.



#### *Icelandic Gambit*

- 1.e4 d5
- 2.exd5 Nf6
- 3.c4 e6

## GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

Most players know better than to allow that, so they choose to develop a knight or plant a pawn at d4 instead. This allows us to regain our pawn and continue to develop rapidly.

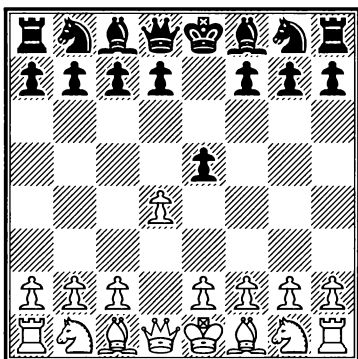
Because 1.e4 d5 is so forcing, there are not a lot of variations which have to be mastered in order to play our gambit repertoire against 1.e4. You can examine the four chapters on the Scandinavian and learn all you need to know to use the opening as an effective weapon in your own tournament or casual play. Don't count on an element of surprise, however. The Scandinavian Defense is a well-known and popular opening these days. Even our gambit continuation is well-documented in recent books.

### REPLIES AGAINST QUEEN PAWN OPENINGS

Turning to 1.d4, we have a broader choice of gambit strategies, but White also has more options. Because we want to build our gambit strategy on a sound positional basis, we must take control of some of the center. Hypermodern approaches, which feature development on the flanks while allowing the opponent to occupy the center, are fine strategies, but they rarely involve gambits.

### THE UNSOUND ENGLUND GAMBIT

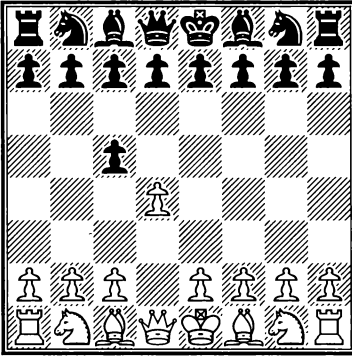
We could confront the enemy pawn with 1...e5, but that is a bad idea for two reasons. First of all, this opening, known as the Englund Gambit, is simply unsound (see *Unorthodox Chess Openings*). In addition, the opening is so limited that there is little new territory to explore. Originality is usually punished in the Englund, and following standard paths leads to a rotten game. So we must dismiss that approach and seek more fruitful paths.



*Englund Gambit*  
1.d4 e5

### BENONI DEFENSE

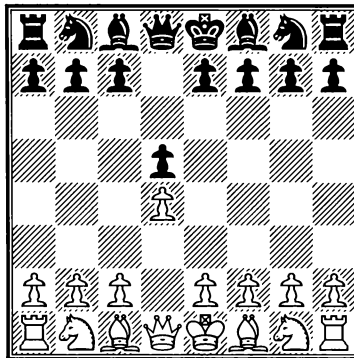
1...c5 is playable, but it isn't really a gambit since White does not usually capture but instead plays 2.d5, gaining space. We do want to play ...c5, but the time is not right. There is a gambit option in 2...Nf6; 3.c4 b5, known as the Benko Gambit, and it is a good gambit, but if White refrains from playing c4, then the game becomes dull, stodgy, and rather unpleasant for Black.



*Benoni Defense*  
1.d4 c5

### A CLASSICAL PRELUDE

Because immediate aggression is unwise, we will stake our claim in the center with 1...d5, and only later advance the c-pawn. This is the Classical approach. Sometimes opponents will conclude that Black wants a quiet maneuvering game. Not so!

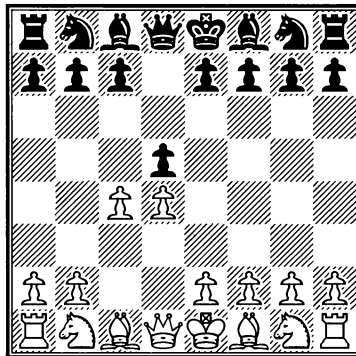


In most cases White will offer a gambit here with 2.c4. A popular alternative is 2.Nf3, which avoids many of Black's gambit options. There we can only hope to transpose into our other defenses, which

## GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

are based on the simple moves ...d5, ...e6, ...c5, and ...Nf6. Don't despair, however, we are not relegated to playing boring old openings. There are plenty of sharp lines awaiting us even in the case of 2.Nf3. But let's face it, if White wants to be a wimp there is little we can do about it. Radical unorthodox gambits just don't work against super-solid play by White.

Let's look on the bright side and assume that White plays the normal move, 2.c4.



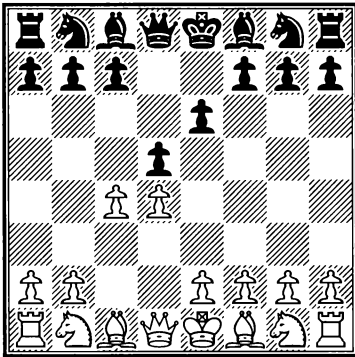
White threatens to capture our pawn at d5. We can either defend it, capture at c4, or try some more radical approach.

### ALBIN COUNTERGAMBIT

In the previous diagram, Black has several immediate gambit tries, including the Albin Countergambit (2...e5) and the symmetrical 2...c5. Although it might make sense to include such openings in our repertoire they have a flaw in that they are not fully sound and a well prepared opponent might put our king to death early in the game.

### QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

Instead, we are going to look at a gambit which has a better reputation, but we need to be patient for a couple more moves. We will play 2...e6, hiding our gambit intentions for a while.



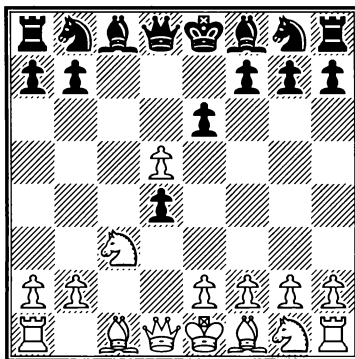
*Queen's Gambit Declined*

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6

The idea is to pave the way for ...c5, the Tarrasch Defense. What we have in mind is not the standard variations, however (those are treated in the *Complete Defense to Queen Pawn Openings*). We are prepared to sacrifice our d-pawn in the interest of rapid development. So after 3.Nc3 c5; 4.cxd5, we surprise our opponent by not recapturing at d5. We capture at d4 instead, even though this leads to the loss of a pawn. After 4...cxd4!? we have the following position.

**Schara Gambit**

This is the **Schara Gambit**. White can capture the pawn at d4 immediately or after an intermediary check at a4. In either case, White has an extra pawn because the d5 square is controlled.

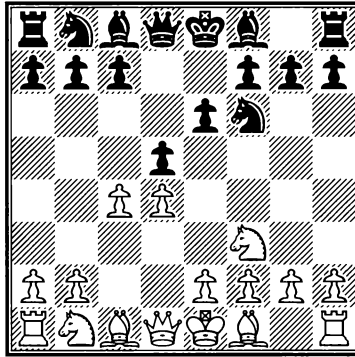


*Schara Gambit*

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.Nc3 c5
- 4.cxd5 cxd4

Suppose, however, White chooses 3.Nf3 instead? We'll could still reply 3...c5 but then White controls d4. After 4.cxd5 cxd4?! there is no attack on a knight at c3, so our plan is not as effective. That's why we'll turn to the more traditional 3...Nf6.

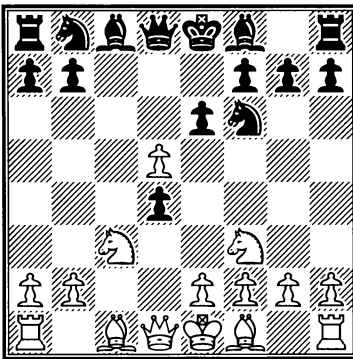
## GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK



White has many different plans now. It is possible to capture at d5, but there are also two straightforward developing moves to be considered, 4.Nc3 and 4.Bg5. We'll need to establish a defense to each of these plans.

### Podolsk Variation

With 4.Nc3 White contests the center. Black must now find a way to avoid boring symmetry, but 4...c5 is still the right move. If White now captures 5.cxd5, then we will use a strategy similar to the Schara Gambit and play 5...cxd4!?, the **Podolsk Variation**.

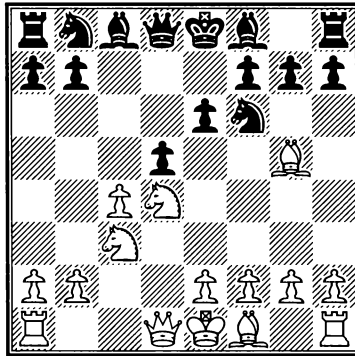


### *Podolsk Variation*

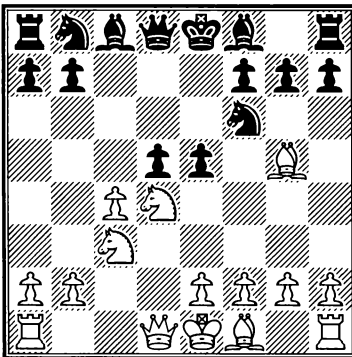
1. d4 Nf6
2. Nf3 d5
3. c4 e6
4. Nc3 c5
5. cxd5 cxd4

### 5.Bg5 Line

Suppose White doesn't capture at d5? On 5.Bg5 Black usually breaks the pin by playing 5...Be7, but instead we will again choose 5...cxd4 and after 6.Nxd4 we have another surprise in store.



Here we take the initiative with 6...e5! The White forces are driven back and we can play with unbridled aggression.



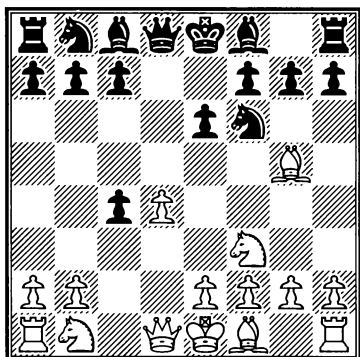
### 5.Bg5 Line

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.Nf3 Nf6
- 4.Nc3 c5
- 5.Bg5 cxd4
- 6.Nxd4 e5

### Pseudo-Vienna

Suppose White plays 4.Bg5 immediately? Then we ignore the pin on the knight at f6 and boldly capture the pawn with 4...dxc4. We'll look at that in the **Queen's Gambit Declined - Pseudo Vienna** chapter.

## GAMBIT OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

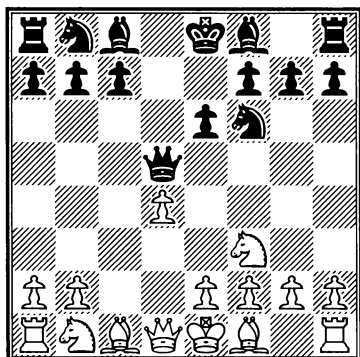


### *Pseudo-Vienna*

- |       |     |
|-------|-----|
| 1.d4  | d5  |
| 2.c4  | e6  |
| 3.Nf3 | Nf6 |
| 4.Bg5 | dx4 |

### **Semi-Exchange Variation**

Finally, White can aim for the Exchange Variation by capturing at d5 on move 3 or 4. Usually the move order will be 4.cxd5 expecting the traditional 4...exd5, but we will cut across White's plans by adopting the unusual 4...Qxd5!?



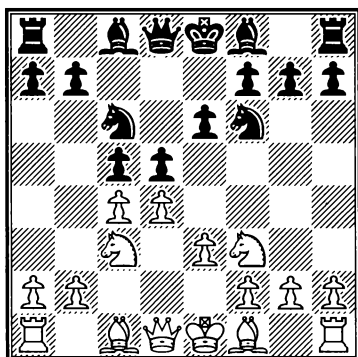
### *Semi-Exchange Variation*

- |        |      |
|--------|------|
| 1.d4   | d5   |
| 2.c4   | e6   |
| 3.Nf3  | Nf6  |
| 4.cxd4 | Qxd5 |

This **Semi-Exchange Variation** is the subject of one of our chapters. Although our queen is exposed to attack at d5, she can also exert a powerful influence by moving to a5 or h5 as the position demands.

### **Symmetrical Variation**

So far we have been avoiding the most boring symmetrical line, the **Symmetrical Tarrasch**. It seems very quiet at first, but it has led to some magnificent combinational victories by Black. After 4.Nc3 c5; 5.e3 Nc6 both sides have pawns and knights developed.



*Symmetrical Variation*

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.Nc3 c5
- 4.e3 Nf6
- 5.Nf3 Nc6

There is tension in the center and either side can change the situation by capturing an enemy pawn. We won't be able to play a gambit here as White's position is too solid, but we can find some very sharp replies which lead to unbalanced positions with chances for major league attacks.

**OTHER OPENINGS**

Our repertoire against 1.e4 and 1.d4 is therefore anchored by gambits, but backed up by solid, if very sharp, secondary openings. We can't force White to let us sacrifice a pawn, but we can make our opponent pay a price for such cowardice.

When we turn to other first moves for White, however, our gambit possibilities are diminished. Of course we could play some silly gambit such as 1.c4 d5? or 1.Nf3 g5?, but there is no point in playing a bad opening just for the sake of giving up a pawn!

**FLANK OPENINGS**

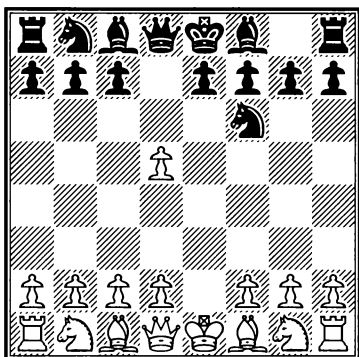
Instead, we'll try to steer the game our way by playing 1.Nf3 d5 or 1.c4 e6. Some ideas are covered in the **Flank Openings** chapter.

**UNORTHODOX OPENINGS**

We'll also look at some unusual gambits in the **Unorthodox Opening** chapter to give you a rounded look at the possibilities as Black.

# SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE

## • Portuguese Variation •



### OPENING MOVES

1.e4 d5  
2.exd5 Nf6

## OVERVIEW

The Modern Variations of the **Scandinavian Defense**, including the **Portuguese Variation**, provide us with a reputable gambit strategy for Black. We don't rush to regain the gambited pawn, but let it sit for a while. We are concerned with development now. We'll be delighted if our opponent chooses to greedily hang on to the pawn and will be able to take advantage of that strategy.

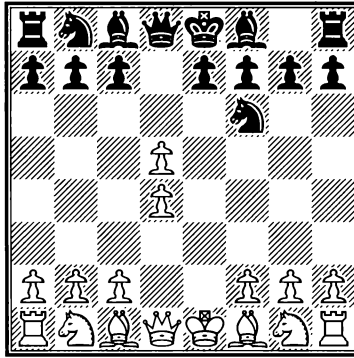
The most common continuation is 2...Qxd5, but this has the drawback of exposing the queen to attack immediately, and after 3.Nc3, she must retreat.

The move 2...Nf6 does not recover the pawn as quickly, but places a piece of less importance on the vulnerable d5-square. Notice that Black has an easy path of development for the bishop at c8.

### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE *Portuguese Variation*

	<b>3.d4</b>	
<i>Options at move 3:</i>		<b>24</b>
Option 1: 3.Nc3		24
Option 2: 3.Bb5+		26
	<b>3...Bg4; 4.f3</b>	
<i>Options at move 4:</i>		<b>29</b>
Option 1: 4.Be2		29
Option 2: 4.Nf3		37
Option 3: 4.Bb5+		42
Option 4: 4.Ne2		44
Option 5: 4.Qd3		44
	<b>4...Bf5; 5.Bb5+</b>	
<i>Options at move 5:</i>		<b>45</b>
Option 1: 5.c4		45
Option 2: 5.Bc4		50
Option 3: 5.g4		51
Option 4: 5.Bd3		52
	<b>5...Nbd7; 6.Nc3</b>	
<i>Options at move 6:</i>		<b>53</b>
Option 1: 6.c4		53
Option 2: 6.Ne2		57

3.d4.



This is known as the Portuguese Variation these days. It is the main subject of this chapter. 3.c4 leads to the Icelandic Gambit, which is the subject of its own chapter. Alternatively, White can choose to defend the pawn by bringing a knight to c3, or give a check at b5. Let's look at those before going further.

**PORTUGUESE VARIATION  
OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 3**

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.d4

Option 1: 3.Nc3

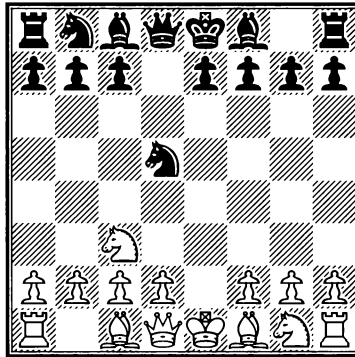
Option 2: 3.Bb5+

**PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 3**

**Option 1: 3.Nc3**

This does not provide sufficient defense for the pawn and we simply capture it with **3...Nxd5**.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION



White has many plans here, but there is no way to achieve an advantage in the opening stage of the game. The most aggressive option is to bring the bishop to c4, attacking the knight. We'll take **4.Bc4** as our main line.

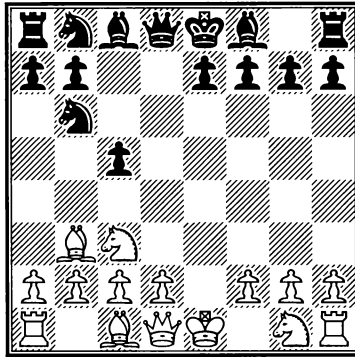
A) 4.Nxd5 Qxd5 gives Black an easy game. It is clear that 5.Nf3 e5; 6.d4 Nc6; 7.c4 is too loosening. 7...Qe4+; 8.Be3 Bb4+; 9.Nd2 exd4; wins, Van Alphen – Dekker, Soest 1996. White might consider 5.d4, for example 5...Nc6; 6.Be3 Bf5 and now 7.Ne2 (7.c3 0-0-0; 8.Nf3 e5; 9.dxe5 Qe4; 10.Nd2 Qxe5; 11.Qf3 Nb4; 12.cxb4 Rxd2! Black wins, Mashinskaya – Minasian, Decin 1996.) 7...Nb4; 8.Nf4 Qc6; 9.Kd2 Nxc2; 10.Rc1 e5; 11.Nd3 Bxd3; 12.Bxd3 Nxe3; 13.Rxc6 Nxd1; 14.Rxc7 Kd8; 15.Rxf7 Nxb2; 16.Bb5 a6; 17.Be2 exd4 forced White's resignation in Wohde – Buch, Bingen 1996.

B) 4.Nge2 tries to avoid the doubling of pawns at c3, but the White pieces are not able to develop easily. 4...Bg4; 5.h3 Nxc3!; 6.bxc3 Bxe2; 7.Bxe2 c6; 8.d4 e6 is very comfortable for Black, Lisitsin – Mikenas, Riga 1968.

C) 4.Nf3 Nxc3; 5.bxc3 g6; 6.d4 Bg7; 7.Bf4 0-0; 8.Be5 c5 gave Black the better game in Kholmov-Alburt, Soviet Union 1972.

D) 4.d4 Bf5; 5.Bc4 e6; 6.Nge2 c6; 7.0-0 Be7 and Black will castle with an equal game, Reer-Holzappel, Braunschweig 1984.

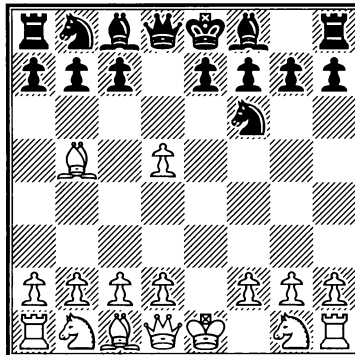
**4...Nb6; 5.Bb3 c5** keeps up the pressure.



Black threatens...c4, trapping the bishop. **6.d3** (6.Qh5 allows Black to play a gambit. 6...c4; 7.Bxc4 Nxc4; 8.Qb5+ Bd7; 9.Qxc4 Bc6 and the pressure on the a8-h1 diagonal is intense. In addition, Black has the bishop pair. An interesting continuation is 10.Qg4 h5; 11.Qg3 Na6; 12.a3 Rh6; 13.f3 Rg6; 14.Qf2 e5; 15.d3 Bc5; 16.Be3 Qb6 and Black had a promising game in Johanesen – Thorhallsson, Reykjavik 1988.) **6...Nc6; 7.Nf3** (7.Qf3 e6; 8.Qg3 Nd4; 9.Bf4 was played in Szell – Varnusz, Budapest 1992. Now 9...Nd5! brings Black a good game.) **7...e6; 8.Bf4 Be7; 9.0-0 0-0**. Black has a comfortable game, and can quickly take the initiative on the kingside, for example 10.Re1 Na5; 11.Ne4 Nxb3; 12.axb3 Nd5; 13.Bg3 f5; 14.Nc3 Nxc3; 15.bxc3 f4 and Black won, Perez – Rasin, Boylston 1996.

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 3

Option 2: **3.Bb5+**



## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

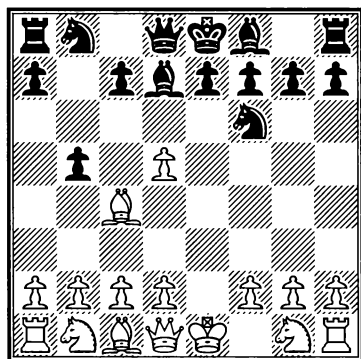
This is a beginner's move. The check does nothing in particular. **3...Bd7** is an adequate reply. White can now exchange the bishops, reinforce the bishop by moving the queen to e2, or retreat. **4.Bc4** leads to the most interesting play.

A) 4.Qe2 Nxd5; 5.Nc3 c6; 6.Bc4 Bf5; 7.Bxd5 cxd5; 8.Qb5+ Qd7; 9.Qxd7+ Nxd7; 10.Nxd5 Rc8; 11.c3 Be4; 12.Ne3 Ne5; 13.d4 Nd3+; 14.Kf1 e6. Black has reasonable compensation for the gambit pawn. The b-pawn can advance and undermine White's pawn chain.

B) 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7; 5.c4 c6; 6.dxc6 Nxc6; 7.Nf3 e5; 8.0-0 Bc5; 9.d3 0-0-0 is given as better for Black by Varnusz. Indeed, Black does seem to have at least enough compensation for the d3-pawn.

C) 4.Be2 Nxd5; 5.d4 Bf5; 6.Nf3 e6; 7.0-0 Nc6; 8.Re1 Be7; 9.Bf1 0-0; 10.c3 was played in Karpov-Dzindzichashvili, Soviet Championship 1971. Here Black can equalize with 10...Bf6.

Black can now seize the initiative with **4...b5!**



This bold move forces the bishop to retreat and the pawn at d5 loses its best supporter. Here are two variations that show how Black should handle the position.

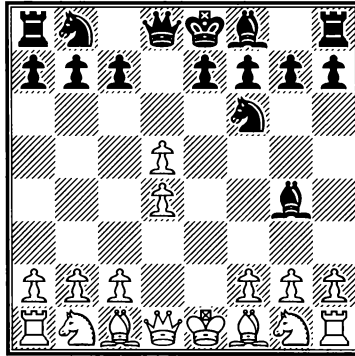
A) 5.Bb3 a5; 6.a3 (6.a4 bxa4; 7.Ba2 Bg4; 8.f3 Bc8; 9.Nc3 Bb7; 10.Nge2 Nxd5; 11.Nxd5 Bxd5; 12.Bxd5 Qxd5; 13.Rxa4 Nd7; 14.0-0 e6. Black has a good position and chances are roughly level, Tseshkovsky – Naumkin, Soviet Union 1987.) 6...Bg4; 7.f3 Bc8; 8.Nc3 Ba6; 9.Nge2 g6; 10.Nd4 Qd7; 11.Qe2 a4; 12.Ba2 b4; 13.Ncb5 b3! 14.cxb3 axb3; 15.Bxb3 Bg7; and Black had good counterplay in Malishev – Simagin, Postal 1984.

B) 5.Be2 is too slow to pose a threat. 5...Nxd5; 6.d4 (6.Bf3 Bc6; 7.Ne2 Nf6; 8.Bxc6+ Nxc6; 9.0-0 e6; 10.d4 Be7 brought Black equality in Suetin – Bronstein, Soviet Union 1965.) 6...a6 (6...e6; 7.Nf3 a6;

8.0-0 Be7; 9.Nbd2 0-0; 10.Ne4 Nf6; 11.Bd3 Bc6; 12.Qe2 Nbd7; 13.Ne5 where a draw was agreed in Das – Szonyi, Balatonbereny 1996, but Black has the better prospects.) 7.a4 b4; 8.c4 bxc3; 9.bxc3 c5; 10.c4 Nb4; 11.Bf3 N8c6; 12.Bxc6 Bxc6; 13.d5 Bb7. Black stands well, Gorjatchev – Buchniecek, Pardubice 1996.

### *Returning to the Main Line*

We now return to the main line. **3...Bg4.**



This is the true gambit continuation. Of course Black can aim for more traditional positions with 3...Nxd5, but this is more fun. The point of the move order is that e2 becomes a battleground with significant consequences.

Looking at the diagram we see that Black has a clear advantage in development, and if White wants to hold on to the d-pawn, then the c-pawn will have to advance. That will cost one more precious tempo which cannot be used for development.

White needs to address the immediate threat against the queen. There are many ways of doing this.

**4.f3** is the most popular move and we take it as the main line. The bishop is driven back, and the e4-square receives some support. We must consider the advance of the f-pawn as our main line, but White can also interpose a knight at f3 or e2, or a bishop at e2. White can also give check at b5 or move the queen to d3.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 4

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.d4 Bg4 4.f3

Option 1: 4.Be2

Option 2: 4.Nf3

Option 3: 4.Bb5+

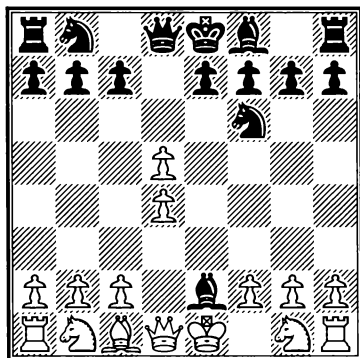
Option 4: 4.Ne2

Option 5: 4.Qd3

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 4

#### Option 1: 4.Be2

White develops and is one step closer to castling. There is a slight variation on this theme in 4.Bb5+ Nbd7; 5.Be2, which we will see in Option 3. Our reaction to the move 4.Be2 is pretty much forced. We capture the bishop with 4...Bxe2 and White has two logical recaptures.

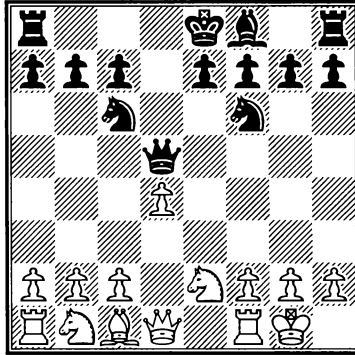


First, we will examine the capture with the knight, and then move on to the capture with the queen. **5.Nxe2 Qxd5; 6.0-0.**

Less logical is 6.Nf4 Qd7; 7.Qf3 Nc6; 8.c3 0-0-0; 9.Nd3 e5; 10.Nxe5 Nxe5; 11.dxe5 Ng4; 12.Bf4 Bc5; 13.0-0 Rhe8 and Black will recover the pawn with a better game, Degremont - Patrat, Cappelle 1991.

Another inferior continuation is 6.Bf4 Qxg2; 7.Rg1 Qc6; 8.Nbc3 Na6; 9.Qd2 0-0-0; 10.0-0-0 g6; 11.d5 Qc4; 12.b3 Qc5; 13.Be3 Qa3+; 14.Kb1 Nb4; 15.Qd4 Rxd5! and Black has a good game, Vink - Conlon,

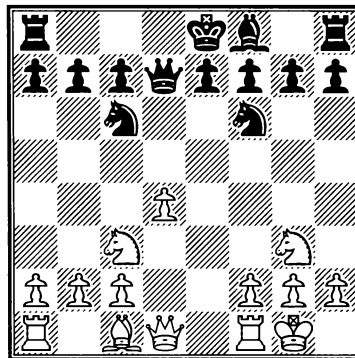
World Under-12 Championship 1993.) 6...Nc6.



Black already has pressure on the d-file and will castle queenside in most cases. Then the fireworks can begin on both flanks.

A) 7.b3 is not a bad plan, but needs testing by stronger players. 7...0-0-0; 8.Bb2 e6; 9.c4 Qh5; 10.Nd2 gave White the advantage in Polovnikova – Coventry, World Girls Under-14 Championship 1996. As Anderson points out, 8...Qh5! is much better. Black has good play on the dark squares e5 and d4.

B) 7.Nbc3 Qf5; 8.Ng3 Qd7 gains a bit of time, but White still has no significant lead in development.

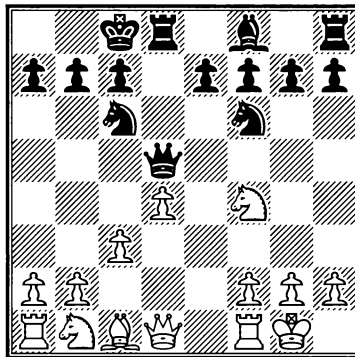


9.Be3 0-0-0; 10.Nce2 h5; 11.Re1 h4; 12.Nf1 h3; 13.Nf4 hxc2; 14.Nxg2 Nxd4; 15.Bxd4 Qxd4. Black was on the way to a win in Belo – Liardet, World Students Championship 1996. 11.f3 has been proposed, but I believe that 11...Nd5; 12.Bf2 h4; 13.Ne4 e6 gives Black a very good game.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

C) 7.Na3 0-0-0; 8.c4 Qe4; 9.Nc2 is very artificial. 9...e6; 10.f3 Qg6; 11.Bd2 Nxd4; 12.Ncxd4 Bc5; 13.Qa4 Qd3; 14.Be1 Qxe2; 15.Bf2 Bxd4; 16.Bxd4 Rxd4; 17.Rfe1 Qxc4; 18.Qxa7 Qa4; 19.Qc5 Rd5. White resigned in Berrig – Liardet, Geneva 1996.

D) 7.c3 is a solid and popular move. 7...0-0-0; 8.Nf4 (8.Nd2 e6; 9.Nf3 h6; 10.Qc2 g5; 11.Be3 Qe4; 12.Qb3 Bd6; 13.a3 Bf4; 14.Nd2 Qd3; 15.Qc4 Qg6; 16.Rfe1 Nd5; 17.Nf1 h5; 18.Qb3 h4; 19.h3 Bxe3; 20.Nxe3 Nxe3; 21.fxe3 Qe4. White had both a structural disadvantage and problems on the kingside, Kaliwoda – Doerner, Postal 1965.) is an interesting position:

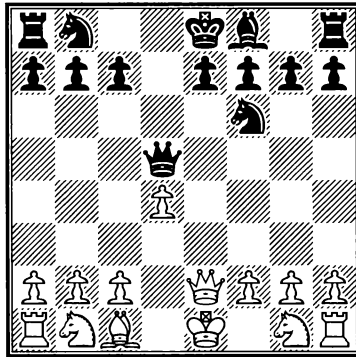


After 8...Qd6; 9.Qa4, Black can play 9...e5; 10.dxe5 Qxe5; 11.Nd2 Bc5; 12.Nf3 Qf5; 13.Ne2 Qd3; 14.Ng3. Instead of 14...Nd5, as in Kurcubic – Liardet, World Student Championship 1996, Black should play 14...h6 and the game remains balanced.

### *Returning to the Main Line of Option 1*

**4...Bxe2.** Let's consider the alternative capture with the queen **5.Qxe2** is more logical than the capture with the knight since it clears the d1 square and makes it easier to castle queenside.

**5...Qxd5** is our response.



**6.Nf3** (6.Nc3 Qxg2; 7.Qf3 Qxf3; 8.Nxf3 c6; 9.Bf4 Nd5; 10.Bd2 Nxc3; 11.Bxc3 e6; 12.Rg1 Na6; 13.0-0 Rg8 and White has no compensation for the pawn. Salamero – Martinez, Ibercaja 1996.) **6...Nc6**. Black can also play 6...e6, as in Kouwenhoven-Hodgson, Aberdeen 1996. Play will often transpose below after White plays 7.0-0 and Black plays 7...Nc6, reaching variation B.

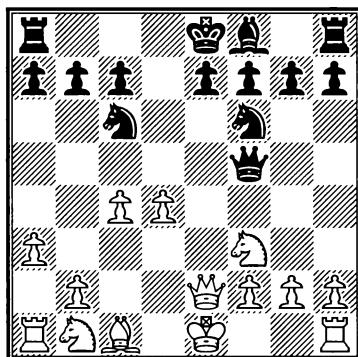
A) 7.c4 is a bit cheeky, but it is the critical line. 7...Qf5 places the queen on a safe and useful square. After all, we don't want to wimp out by offering an exchange of queens with 7...Qe4, and the other alternative, 7...Qh5, has problems after 8.e5. So, after 7...Qf5! White must select a plan. Castling combined with the advance of the d-pawn is featured in the first two examples, while a queenside plan is seen in the third.

A1) 8.Nc3 0-0-0; 9.d5 Nb4; 10.0-0 Nd3; 11.Rd1 Nxc1; 12.Raxc1 and White went on to win in Hellers – Borbjerggaard, Rilton Cup 1996. This plan is artificial for Black and should be avoided. 10...e6! is better, challenging the occupation of d5 and allowing the bishop to be developed.

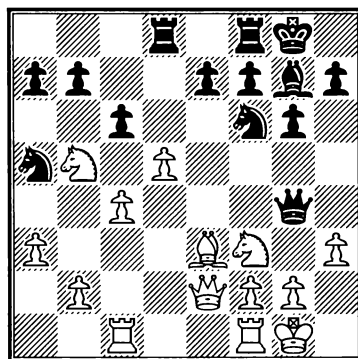
A2) 8.0-0 0-0-0; 9.d5 Nb4; 10.Nd4 Qd3; 11.a3 Qxe2; 12.Nxe2 Nd3 is a pleasant variation for Black. 13.b4 Nxc1; 14.Rxc1 g6; 15.Nbc3 Bh6; 16.Rd1 Rhe8; 17.Rab1 e6; 18.dxe6 Rxe6; 19.Rxd8+ Kxd8. Black has at least equality, Ratcu – Carvalho, World Girls Under-16 Championship 1992.

A3) 8.a3 tries to protect the b4-square and perhaps discourage queenside castling.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION



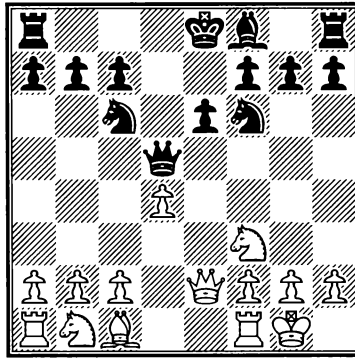
8...g6 makes sense now. For example, 9.Nc3 Bg7; 10.0-0 (10.Be3 10...0-0; 11.0-0 b6; 12.d5 Nd8; 13.Bd4 e6 was drawn in Macekova-Carvalho, World Girls Under-18 Championship 1993.) 10...Rd8; 11.Rd1 0-0; 12.h3 e6; 13.Be3 Rd7; 14.Rd2 Rfd8; 15.Rad1 Ne4; 16.Nxe4 Qxe4; 17.Bg5 (17.Ng5 Qf5; 18.Nf3 would draw.) 17...Qxe2 18.Rxe2 Nxd4; 19.Nxd4 Rxd4; 20.Rxd4 Rxd4. White cannot hold the endgame, Carvalho - Gomez, Moscow 1994. Anderson offers 11.Nb5 as an improvement for White, yet after his 11.0-0; 12.d5 Na5; 13.Be3 Qg4 14.Ra1 c6; 15.h3.



I think the position is not bad if 15...Qf5? 12.Nbd4! is avoided. On 15...Qh5 White can grab a pawn with 16.dxc6 bxc6; 17.Nxa7. A more interesting approach in the diagrammed position is 15...Qe4!? Suppose White now tries to win a piece by offering the c-pawn. A fascinating line is 16.Nc3!? (16.Ng5 is met by 16...Qh4.) 16...Qxc4; 17.b4! Qxe2; 18.Nxe2 Nxd5; 19.bxa5 Nxe3; 20.fxe3 Re3. Black will

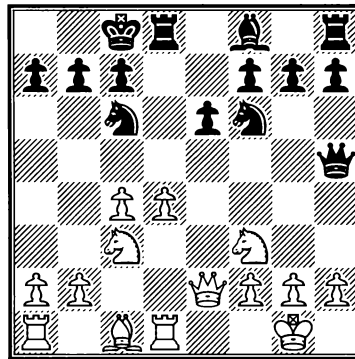
win either the a-pawn or the e-pawn and have three pawns for the piece.

B) 7.0-0 is a slow plan and Black has time for 7...e6.



Again Black has a solid formation and can finish developing quickly.

B1) 8.Rd1 0-0-0; 9.c4 (9.Nc3 Qh5; 10.Bf4 Bd6; 11.Bxd6 Rxd6; 12.Rd2 Rhd8; 13.Rad1 a6; 14.h3 g5; 15.Qe3 h6; 16.Ne5 Nxe5; 17.Qxe5 Qg6; 18.Rd3 Nd5; 19.Nxd5 Rxd5 was equal in Campora-Spraggett, Spanish Team Championship 1996.) 9...Qh5; 10.Nc3. A critical position these days.



10...Bd6 (Black might consider 10...h6 as an alternative.) 11.Be3!?

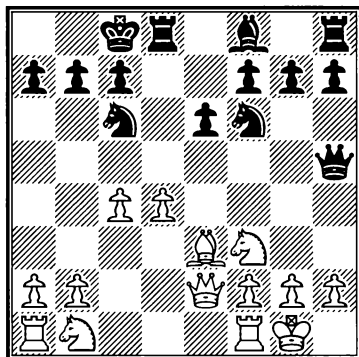
gives Black some problems to solve. (Inferior is 11.a3 e5; 12.d5 e4; 13.Nxe4 Bxh2+; 14.Kf1 Nxe4; 15.Qxe4 Rhe8 with a clear advantage for Black, Kouwenhoven-Hodgson, Aberdeen 1996. Also ineffective is 11.c5 Be7; 12.b4 e5; 13.dxe5 Rxd1+; 14.Nxd1 Ng4; 15.Bf4 Qf5,

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which was eventually drawn in Zulfugarli – Forster, World Student Championship 1996.). Black's best here is 11...e5!; 12.d5 e4; 13.dxc6 exf3; 14.cxb7+ Kb8. White has to capture on f3 and let Black have the pawn at h2, after which the endgame is fine for Black: 15.Qxf3 Bxh2+; 16.Kh1 Qxf3; 17.gxf3 Be5.

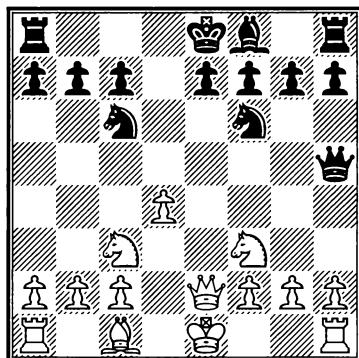
B2) 8.Nc3 Qf5; 9.Nb5 0–0–0; 10.Ne5 Nxd4; 11.Nxd4 Rxd4; 12.Nxf7 Rg8; 13.Ng5 Bd6; 14.Qxe6+ Qxe6; 15.Nxe6 Re4; and Black has compensation for the pawn even in the endgame. 16.Ng5 Re2; 17.c3 Ng4; 18.Nf3 Rf8; 19.b4 Rc2; 20.h3 Ne5; 21.Nd4 Rxc3; 22.Nb5 Rd3 brought Black equality in Hauchard – Van de Voort, Paris 1990.) Or 9.Qb5 Qxb5; 10.Nxb5 with a barren position in Ochoa de Echaguen – Rodriguez, Spanish Team Championship 1996.

B3) 8.Be3 is too slow to cause any problem. 8...0–0–0; 9.c4 Qh5.



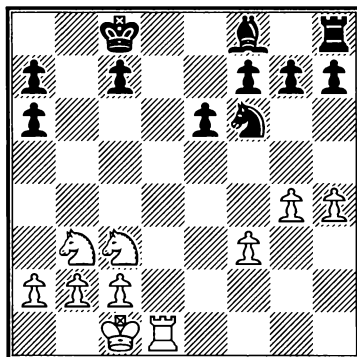
Both sides now complete development with 10.Nc3 Bd6. Black has good prospects on the kingside. 11.Rd1 transposes to B1.

C) 7.Nc3 is best met by 7...Qh5.



Here we have an example of two world class players fighting it out in our system. **8.Bg5** (8.Bf4 0-0-0; 9.0-0-0 e6; 10.Rhe1 Bb4; 11.Qc4 Nd5; 12.Bg3 Bxc3; 13.bxc3 Nb6; 14.Qb3 Rd5; 15.Ne5 Nxe5; 16.Bxe5 Rd7 is a bit better for Black, since White's pawns are more vulnerable. Frank - Forster, Geneva 1997. This position has been scrutinized by the theoreticians. Shirov suggests 8.Qb5!? 0-0; 9.Qxh5 Nxh5; 10.Ng5 Nxd4; 11.0-0 Nxc2; 12.Rb1 with compensation. Hazai & Lukacs give instead 8...0-0-0; 9.Qxh5 Nxh5; 10.Ng5 Nxd4; 11.0-0 Nxc2; 12.Rb1 with sufficient compensation.)

**8...Nxd4; 9.Nxd4 Qxg5; 10.h4 Qh5; 11.f3.** (Exchanging queens does not lead to any advantage for White since 11.Qxh5 Nxh5 11.Ncb5 Rc8! 12.Nxa7 Rd8 13.Nb3 c6 traps the knight at a7.) **11...0-0-0; 12.0-0 e6; 13.g4 Qa5!** The Black queen freely operates on both sides of the board.) **14.Nb3 Rxd1+; 15.Rxd1 Qa6; 16.Qxa6 bxa6.**



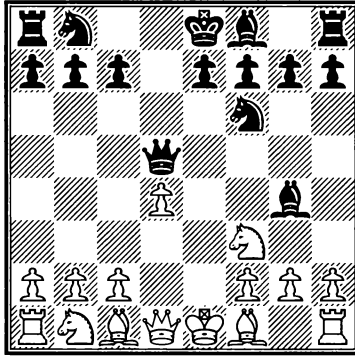
This is an interesting endgame. White's extra pawn means something, but the weakness of the queenside gives White some compensation. More importantly, Black has the advantage of bishop against knight. The continuation of the game shows how Black can exploit the superior position: 17.Rd4 Nd7; 18.Ra4 Ne5; 19.Nd2 Kb7; 20.Kd1 Be7; 21.h5 g6; 22.Re4 Nc6; 23.hxg6 hxg6; 24.f4 Rh1+; 25.Ke2 f5; 26.gxf5 gxf5; 27.Rc4 Rh2+; 28.Kd1 e5; 29.Nd5 Rh1+; 30.Ke2 Bh4; 31.Nb3 Bg3; 32.Nc5+ Kc8; 33.Nb3 Rh2+; 34.Kd1 exf4; 35.Rxc6 f3; 36.Rf6 Rh1+; 37.Kd2 f2; 38.Rf8+ Kd7; 39.Rxf5 f1Q 40.Rxf1 Rxf1; and Black went on to win in Svidler-Shirov, Tilburg 1996.

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### PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 4

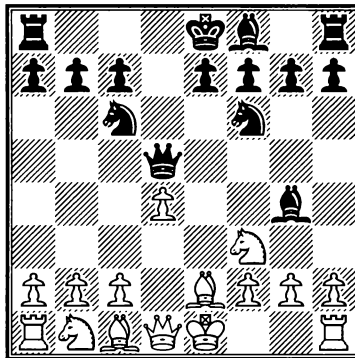
#### Option 2: 4.Nf3

Black can now afford to recapture the pawn with 4...Qxd5.



White gains nothing by kicking the queen right with 5.Nc3 Qh5; (Not 5...Bxf3?; 6.Nxd5 Bxd1; 7.Nxc7+ Kd8; 8.Nxa8 Bxc2; 9.Bg5!) 6.Bf4 (6.h3 Bxf3; 7.Qxf3 Qxf3; 8.gxf3 e6 is already better for Black, De Araujo-Santos, Parana 1993.) 6...Bxf3; 7.Qxf3 Qxf3; 8.gxf3. Here 8...c6; 9.Ne4 Nbd7; 10.0-0-0 e6 is very solid for Black. The weakness of White's pawns is at least partially offset by the bishop pair, but on the whole I'd rather play Black. 11.c4 Be7; 12.Rg1 0-0; 13.Bd3 of Apicella - Ferreira, Asiago 1994 should be met by 13...Rfd8.

5.Be2 allows us to put additional pressure on the center with 5...Nc6. In general, our plan is familiar. We will castle queenside and move our queen to h5 to assist in the kingside attack.

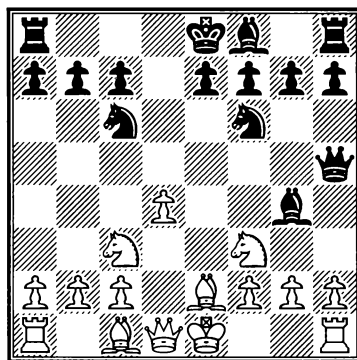


White has five distinct strategies in this position. Two involve attacking the enemy queen. The first plan we will look at involves using the knight, the second makes use of the c-pawn. Then we examine the consequences of immediately challenging the bishop at g4. Finally, we get to the main lines where both sides castle immediately. Of course transpositions among the variations are possible, and the only defining characteristic is the question of whether the knight goes to c3 before the c-pawn advances.

- A) 6.Nc3
- B) 6.c4
- C) 6.h3
- D) 6.Be3

Then we'll pick up 6.0-0 as our main line.

A) 6.Nc3 Qh5 places our queen in attacking formation, creating a battery with the bishop.



White now must continue with development. This gives Black time to hustle the king to safety on the queenside.

A1) 7.bf4 0-0-0; 8.Be5 (8.0-0 e6; 9.h3 Qf5; 10.Be3 is Boehne – Heiler, Slovenia 1996, where 10...Bxf3; 11.Bxf3 Ne5; 12.Be2 Be7 is better for Black. Also, 8.Qd2 Qf5; 9.Be3 e5 gives Black the initiative.) 8...e6; 9.0-0 Bd6; 10.Bxd6 Rxd6; 11.Nb5 Rd7; 12.c3 Bxf3; 13.gxf3 is Zelic-Stadler, Croatian Women's Championship 1996. Here 13...e5 is strong.

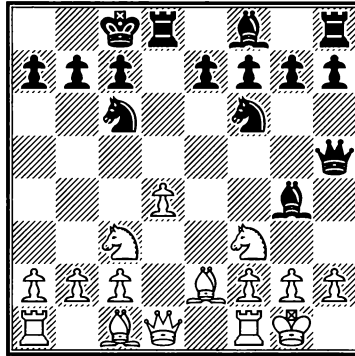
A2) 7.h3 0-0-0; 8.Be3 e5; 9.0-0 exd4; 10.Nxd4 Bxe2; 11.Ncx2 Nxd4; 12.Nxd4 Qe5 provides at least equality for Black, Galindo-Daniel, Gran Canaria 1996.

A3) 7.Be3 0-0-0; 8.Ng5 (8.h3 e5; 9.Rg1 Nxd4; 10.Bxd4 Bxf3; 11.Bxf3 Qg5; 12.Bxb7+ Kxb7; 13.Qf3+ c6; 14.Be3 Qg6; 15.Qe2 is a

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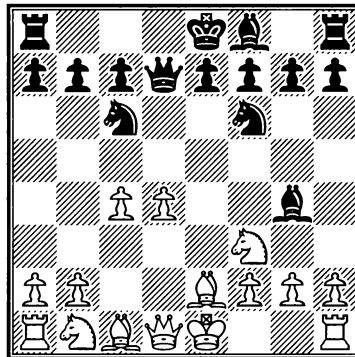
messy position, Cao-Damaso, Moscow 1994, and here 15...Bb4! would have given Black the advantage.) 8...Bxe2; 9.Qxe2 Qg6; 10.0-0 e6; 11.Nf3 is Fruteau-Brebion, Massy 1993 and here 11...Ng4 looks best.

A4) 7.0-0 is an obvious choice, and then 7...0-0 is the most logical continuation.



8.h3 (8.Be3 e5; 9.h3 exd4; 10.Nxd4 Bxe2; 11.Ncxe2 Nxd4; 12.Nxd4 Qg6= Massimi – Devaud, Paris 1993.) 8...Nxd4; 9.Nxd4 Bxe2; leaves White fighting for equality. 10.Ncxe2 (After 10.Qxe2 Rxd4; 11.Qxh5 Nxh5; 12.Nb5 Rb4. Black is slightly better.) 10...e5; 11.c3 (11.Be3 Bc5; 12.c3 exd4; 13.Nxd4 Qg6; 14.Qf3 Rhe8; 15.a4 Nd5; 16.Ne6 Rxe6; 17.Bxc5 b6. Black is slightly better Tinture – Brebion, Postal 1992.) 11...exd4; 12.cxd4 Bd6; 13.Nc3 was drawn in Bosch-Martinez, Barcelona 1996.

B) Theory considers the position after 6.c4 Qd7 as about equal.



7.Be3 (7.d5 Bxf3; 8.Bxf3 Ne5; 9.Be2 e6; 10.Qb3 Bc5; 11.Be3 Bxe3;

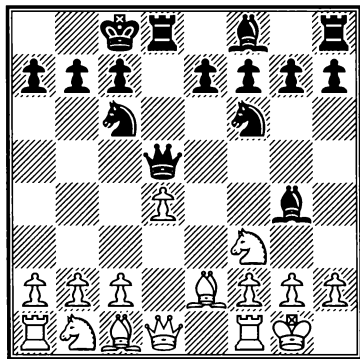
12.Qxe3 Ng6; 13.Nc3 0-0; 14.dxe6 Qxe6; 15.Qxe6 fxe6; 16.0-0-0 c6 was seen in Okhotnik – Jadoul, 1989. The position is not really better for White because the pressure on the f-file makes up for the weak pawn at e6.) 7...Rd8; 8.Nbd2 e6; 9.0-0 Be7; 10.Ne5 Bxe2; 11.Qxe2 Nxd4; 12.Bxd4 Qxd4; 13.Ndf3 Qe4; 14.Qxe4 Nxe4. Black went on to win in Kassis – Van de Voort, Belfort 1989.

C) 6.h3 poses the traditional question: to capture or not to capture. In this case, retreating is better. 6...Bf5; 7.Nc3 (7.0-0 0-0-0; 8.c4 Qa5; 9.Nc3 e6; gave the computer equality in Wolff-VIRTUAL CHESS, Harvard Cup 1995.) 7...Qd7; 8.0-0 a6; 9.Be3 0-0-0; gave Black dynamic counterplay in Agopov – Salmensuu, Finland Junior Championship 1996.

D) 6.Be3 0-0-0; 7.c4 Qh5 with typical counterplay, Manhardt – Cukier, World Junior Championship 1996.

*Returning to the Main Line of Option 2*

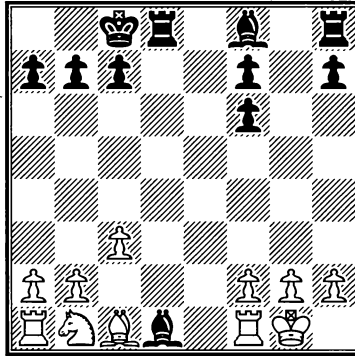
4...Qxd5; 5.Be2 Nc6; 6.0-0 0-0-0. This continuation is the most common line.



The stage is now set for play on opposite wings.

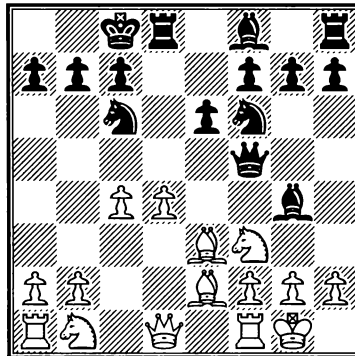
A) 7.c3 e5. White can revert to the c4 plan with 8.c4. Every tempo counts, however. 8...Qd7; 9.d5 Bxf3; 10.Bxf3 Nd4; 11.Nc3 Qf5; 12.Be3 (12.Be2 Bc5; 13.Be3 Kb8. Black was never in danger in Schild – Liardet, Geneva 1995.) 12...Nxf3+; 13.Qxf3 Qxf3; 14.gxf3 Nd7; 15.Rfd1 g5; 16.Rab1 Bb4; 17.Ne2 f5; with a comfortable position for Black, Arencibia – Sariego, Capablanca Memorial 1995. That means any player of the White side with enough guts or ambition must go for 8.Nxe5 Nxe5; 9.dxe5 Qxd1; 10.Bxd1 Bxd1; 11.exf6 gxf6.

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The bishop pair is worth the structural price. Note that White cannot pick up time with 12.Be3, since the pawn at a7 is not threatened. If White captures it, then the bishop presides over his own funeral after Black plays ...b6 and ...Kb7.

B) 7.c4 lets Black play the queen to the f-file, as an alternative to her usual home on the h-file, or the retreat to d7 seen in the examples we just looked at. 7...Qf5; 8.Be3 (8.d5 e6; 9.Bd3 Bxf3; 10.gxf3 Qh3; 11.dxc6 fails to 11...Bd6; 12.cxb7+ Kb8 and an embarrassed player of the White side resigned in Maric-Hebden, Cappelle la Grande 1996.) 8...e6.



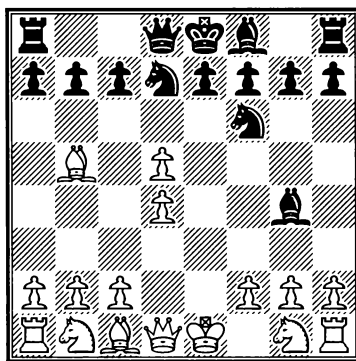
Black has nothing to worry about now, as the following examples show. 9.Qa4 Qa5 gives Black instant equality. 9.Nbd2 Bb4; 10.a3 Bxd2; 11.Qxd2 Ne4 is fine for Black. The obvious developing move 9.Nc3 is handled by 9...Bc5; 10.Qa4 (10.Qb3 Bxd4; 11.Bxd4 Rxd4; 12.Nxd4 Nxd4; 13.Qd1 Rd8; 14.f3 Nxf3+; 15.Bxf3 Rxd1; 16.Raxd1 Qc5+;

17.Kh1 Qxc4; and Black won in Rizouk – Rocha, Algarve 1995.) 10...Bxf3; 11.Bxf3 Nxd4; 12.Bxd4 Bxd4. The central situation has clarified a bit, though another series of exchanges at d4 is in the offing. 13.Rad1 Qc5; 14.Nb5 a6; 15.b4 Qxc4; 16.Na3 Qxa2; 17.b5 a5; 18.Rxd4 Rxd4; 19.Qxd4 Qxa3; 20.Qa7 Kd7; 21.Qxb7 Qc5; 22.Bc6+ Kd6; 23.Rd1+ Nd5; 24.Bxd5 exd5; 25.b6 Qc6; 26.Qa6 and if Black had now captured at b6 with the pawn in Ottens – Schulenburg, Germany 1996, the material advantage would have been overwhelming.

## **PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 4**

### **Option 3: 4.Bb5+**

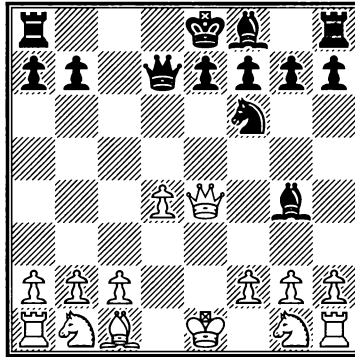
The check is not harmful, and we can handle it with the developing move 4...Nbd7.



White's bishop doesn't accomplish much here except to bring the knight to d7. That may not be the best square for the piece, but White is falling seriously behind in development.

A) 5.Qd3 is not bad. The young man playing White did a good job in the following game: 5...a6; 6.Ba4 b5; 7.Bb3 Nb6; 8.Nf3 Nbx d5 9.Ne5 Bh5; 10.Qh3 Bg6; 11.Nxg6 f xg6; 12.Nd2 Qd7; 13.Qxd7+ Kxd7; 14.Nf3 e6; 15.Ne5+ Ke8; 16.0-0 Bd6; 17.Re1 Bxe5; 18.Rxe5 Nd7; 19.Re2 Rf8; 20.Bg5 h6; 21.Bd2, 1-0 Navara – Buckley, World Boys Under-12 Championship 1996. Black's fifth move left a lot to be desired. 5...Nxd5 must be correct. 6.Qe4 c6; 7.Bxc6 N5f6; 8.Bxd7+ Qxd7.

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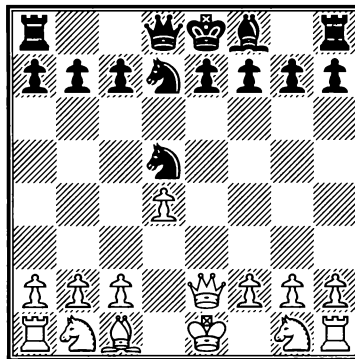


Black's advanced development provides compensation for the pawn.

B) 5.Nf3 Nxd5; 6.0-0 is an uninspired try by White. 6...c6; 7.Be2 e6; 8.c4 N5f6; 9.h3 Bh5; 10.b3 Be7; 11.Bb2 0-0. Black has a solid position, Wehmeier – Correia, Olot 1996. No better is 6.h3 Bh5; 7.Be2 e6; 8.c4 N5f6; 9.Nc3 Be7; 10.0-0 0-0 when 11.Ne5 Bxe2; 12.Qxe2 c6 was even in Ahn – Santos, 1992.)

C) 5.f3 makes a lot of sense and it is surprising it is not seen more often. 5...Bh5 (5...Bf5 may be more accurate.) 6.c4 a6; 7.Bxd7+ Qxd7; 8.Ne2 b5; 9.cxb5 axb5; 10.0-0 Nxd5 was level in Aveline – Devaud, Paris Championship 1993.

D) 5.Be2 leads to simplification with 5...Bxe2; 6.Qxe2 Nxd5.

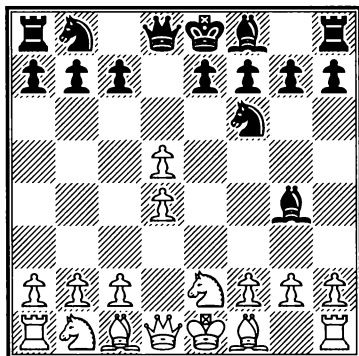


Black has no problems equalizing, however. 7.c4 (7.Nf3 e6; 8.0-0 c6; 9.c4 N5f6 with a solid Caro-Kann formation.) 7...N5f6; 8.Nc3 c6; 9.Nf3 Nb6; 10.Bg5 e6; 11.Rd1 Be7; 12.0-0 0-0; 13.Rfe1 was a bit

better for White in Kiiik – Salmensuu, Tampere 1997. 9...e6 is better. Black need not fear 10.d5 as after 10...exd5; 11.cxd5 Qe7; 12.dxe6 Qxe6; 13.Qxe6 fxe6 Black's structural weakness is not all that significant.

**PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 4**

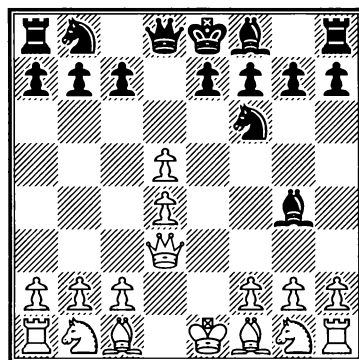
**Option 4: 4.Ne2**



Against the passive move we will regain our pawn using the knight with 4...Nxd5. Here 5.c4 Nb6; 6.Nbc3 allows Black to equalize with 6...e5! For example: 7.d5 c6; 8.Qd3 Qd7, Melekhin – Saulin, Moscow 1996.

**PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 4**

**Option 5: 4.Qd3**

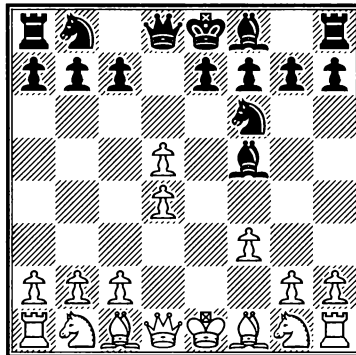


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This harmless move aims to control important light squares.  
4...Nxd5; 5.Qe4 Qd7; 6.Bc4 c6 is the simplest defense.

### *Returning to the Main Line*

4...Bf5.



5.Bb5+. This is the most frequent reply, but there are a few others that are seen. White can try to protect the pawn at d5 with either a pawn or bishop at c4. The bishop on the kingside can be harassed by the g-pawn. White can also simply develop a bishop to d3.

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 5

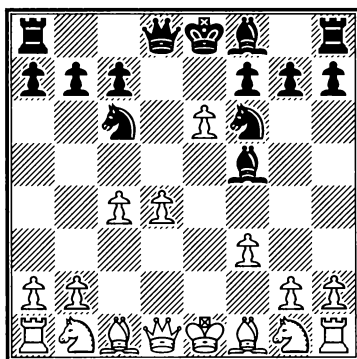
1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.d4 Bg4 4.f3 Bf5 5.Bb5+

- Option 1: 5.c4
- Option 2: 5.Bc4
- Option 3: 5.g4
- Option 4: 5.Bd3

## PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 5

### Option 1: 5.c4

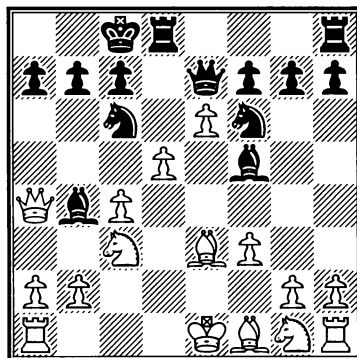
Here we can adopt a gambit in Icelandic style with 5...e6; 6.dxe6 Nc6!



White has a dominating pawn position in the center. Black has three pieces developed, against none by White. This position is complicated, but Black seems to be doing well. White must do something about the situation at d4, and the options are defending the pawn with the bishop or advancing the pawn to d5.

A) 7.Be3 Bb4+; 8.Nc3 Qe7 is an attempt to keep the development moving. Black will castle to the queenside.

A1) 9.d5 0-0-0; 10.Qa4.

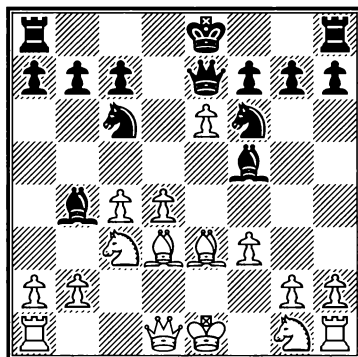


10...Nxd5!; 11.cxd5 Qh4+; 12.Kd1? The Grandmaster walks into the line of fire. (12.Ke2 was the only defense. 12...Nd4+; 13.Bxd4 Qxd4; and Black threatens to recover the piece with...Bxc3. 14.Qb3 Bc5; 15.Nh3 Qe3+; 16.Kd1 Bxh3; 17.Ne4 Qxb3+; 18.axb3 Rxd5+; 19.Kc2 Bxe6; 20.Bc4 Re5; 21.Nxc5 Rxc5; 22.Rxa7 and after all that the material is equal. 22...Kd7; 23.Rxb7 Bxc4; 24.bxc4 Rxc4+ is almost certainly going to end in a draw.) 12...Rxd5+; 13.Nxd5 Qe1#,

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Wang Zili-Damaso, China vs. Portugal 1996.

A2) 9.Bd3 offers to exchange bishops.

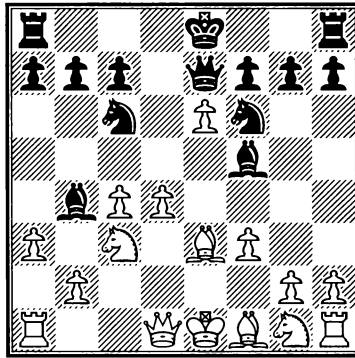


Now Black has many captures to consider! 9...Bxe6 is the grand-master choice.

A2a) 10.Kf2 0-0-0; 11.Nge2 Rhe8; 12.Qd2 Kb8; (12...h5 comes into consideration.) 13.Rhe1 g5; 14.a3 (14.d5 Ne5; 15.Nd4 Bc8; 16.Bxg5 Nxd3+; 17.Qxd3 Ng4+; 18.fxg4 Qxg5; 19.h3 h5; 20.gxh5 Qxh5; 21.Kg1 and White has an insurmountable advantage.) 14...Bxc3; 15.Qxc3 g4; 16.Nf4 gxf3; 17.gxf3 Ng4+; 18.fxg4 Qh4+; 19.Ke2 Bxg4+; 20.Kd2 Qxh2+; 21.Re2 Bxe2; 22.Nxe2 Rd7; 23.Re1 f5; 24.Bg1 Qh6+; 25.Kd1 f4; 26.Rf1 Rf7; 27.d5 f3; 28.dxc6 fxe2+ 29.Bxe2 Rd8+. Black is better, Boulard – Eliet, France 1993.

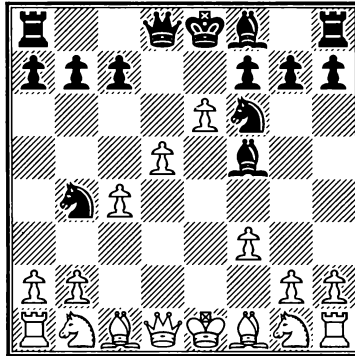
A2b) 10.Qe2 gets the queen off the d-file in anticipation of 10...0-0-0; 11.a3 Ba5; (11...Bxc3+ would save an important tempo. 12.bxc3 Rhe8 and Black has a good game.) 12.d5 Bxc3+; 13.bxc3 Ne5; 14.Bc2 Rhe8; 15.Bd4 (15.dxe6 Qxe6; 16.Bd4 Qd6; 17.Bf5+ Kb8; 18.Be4 c5; 19.Bxe5 Qxe5; 20.Qe3 Nxe4; 21.fxe4 Qxe4; 22.Qxe4 Rxe4+; 23.Ne2 Rde8; 24.Ra2 Rxc4; 25.0-0 and White is winning.) 15...Bxd5; 16.cxd5 Qd6; 17.Rd1 Ng6; 18.Be4 Nf4; 19.Qc2 Nxe4; 20.fxe4 Qg6; 21.Nf3 Rxe4+; 22.Kf1 Rxd5; 23.Re1 Rxe1+ and White went on to win, Almasi – Adorjan, Zalakaros 1992.

A3) 9.a3 puts the question to the bishop at b4.



9...Qxe6; 10.Kf2 (10.Qd2 might be met by 10...Na5!? since on 11.axb4 Nb3; 12.Nd5 Nxd5; 13.cxd5 Qe7! Black has many threats.) 10...Bxc3; 11.d5 Qd6; 12.bxc3 Ne5; 13.Qa4+ Bd7; 14.Qb4 b6; 15.Bd4 0-0; 16.Qxd6 cxd6; 17.Bxe5 dxe5. White is only a little better in this endgame because it is easy for Black to keep pressure on the crucial c5 square. 18.Bd3 Rac8; 19.Ne2 Rfe8; 20.Ke3 e4; 21.fxe4 Nxe4; 22.Bxe4 Bf5; 23.Ng3 Bxe4; 24.Nxe4 Rxc4; 25.Rhd1 was agreed drawn in Grischuk – Chow, World Boys Under-14 Championship 1996.

B) 7.d5 is the most challenging line. 7...Nb4.



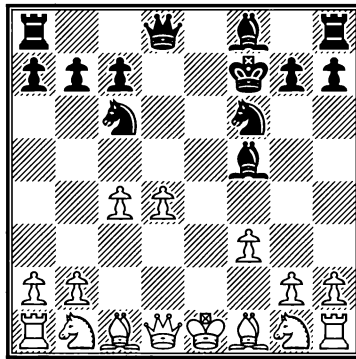
B1) 8.Na3 Bc5; (8...fxe6; 9.g4 Bg6; 10.Qa4+ Qd7; 11.Qxd7+ Nxd7; 12.dxe6 Nc5; and Black has compensation for two pawns, especially since one is coming back right away.) 9.Nh3 Bxh3; 10.gxh3 Nh5; 11.Qe2 Qh4+; 12.Kd1 0-0-0; 13.Bd2 Rhe8; 14.Nc2 Nxc2; 15.Kxc2 fxe6; 16.Qe4 Qf2 was dead even in Radulov – Mevel, Maromme 1994.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

B2) 8.Qa4+ c6; 9.exf7+ Kxf7; 10.Na3 Bc5; 11.Bd2 Re8+; 12.Kd1 a5; 13.g4 Bd3; 14.Bxd3 Nxd3; and Black was better in “Brit” – Schiller, Internet Chess Club 1997.

B3) 8.exf7+ Kxf7; 9.Na3 Bc5; (9...Qe8+; 10.Be2 Nd3+; 11.Kf1 Nxc1; 12.Rxc1 Bxa3; 13.bxa3 Qe3; 14.g4 Bg6; 15.h4 h6; 16.c5 Qxa3; 17.h5 Bh7; and the position remains unclear.) 10.Be2 Re8; 11.Kf1 c6; 12.g4 Bg6; 13.h4 Qd6; 14.h5 Bd3; 15.Bxd3 Qg3; 16.Bg6+ hxg6; 17.hxg6+ Kg8; 18.Nh3 Nxg4. Black has a winning position, Goerlinger-Bergez, Paris 1994.

C) 7.exf7+ Kxf7 is nothing to worry about. The Black king is grateful that White has occupied c4 with a pawn, since now the king will not have to fear checks on the diagonal.

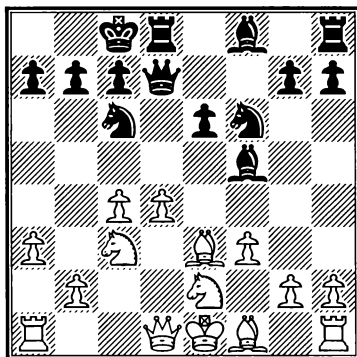


C1) 8.Be3 Bb4+; 9.Nc3 Re8; 10.Kf2 Bxc3; 11.bxc3 Ne4+; (11...Qe7; 12.Qd2 Rad8; 13.Re1 Qa3; 14.d5 Qa4; 15.Bf4 Rxe1; 16.Qxe1 Re8; 17.Qd2 Na5; 18.Bxc7 Nxc4; 19.Bxc4 Qxc4; 20.d6 Nd5; 21.Ne2 Nxc7; 22.dxc7 Qxc7 and White has an extra pawn, though the endgame will be hard to win.) 12.fxe4 Qh4+; 13.g3 Qxe4; 14.Qf3 Qc2+; 15.Be2 Kg8; 16.Rc1 Qxa2; 17.Qd5+ Kh8; 18.Qxf5 Rf8; 19.Qxf8+ Rxf8+; 20.Nf3 Qa5; 21.h4 Qf5; 22.Bf4 Qd7; 23.Bd3 Qg4; 24.Rce1 h6; 25.Re4 and Black gave up in Davin – Sinn, World Open 1995.

C2) 8.d5 Nb4 transposes to the 7.d5 line.

C3) 8.Bd3 lets Black take the initiative with 8...Bb4+; 9.Nc3 Re8+; 10.Nge2 Bxd3; 11.Qxd3 Qxd4; 12.Qxd4 Nxd4; 13.Kf2 Nc2; 14.Rb1 Bc5+; 15.Kf1 Be3; 16.Bxe3 Nxe3+; 17.Kf2 Nxc4. Black is not worse, Stojanowski – Ribeiro, European under-14 Championship 1994.

D) 7.Ne2 is slow, and Black has time to recapture the pawn and then castle on the queenside: 7...fxe6; 8.a3 Qd7; 9.Be3 0–0–0; 10.Nbc3.



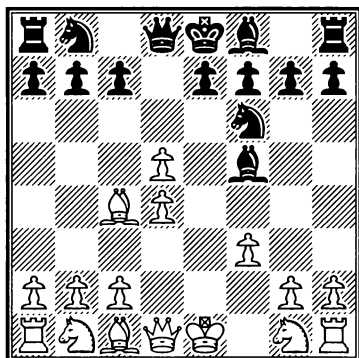
Black has two good paths to explore here, with a choice of d-file or g-file as the theater of operations.

D1) 10...Qe8; 11.Qa4 Nd7; 12.c5 e5; 13.d5 Nd4; 14.c6 Nc5; 15.Qxa7 Nd3+; 16.Kd1 Nxb2+; 17.Kc1 Nd3+; 18.Kb1 Nxc6; 19.dxc6 Qxc6; 20.Qa8+ Kd7; 21.Qa5 Qe6; 22.Nc1 Nf2+; 23.Kb2 Nxb1 with an unclear position in which Black's chances are no worse, Batsanin – Saulin, Moscow 1996.

D2) 10...g5; 11.Qa4 Qg7; (11...g4 and Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn.) 12.0-0-0 Nd7; 13.b4 Nb6; 14.Qb3 Be7; 15.d5 exd5; 16.cxd5 Qe5; 17.Bf2 Bf6; 18.dxc6 Be6; 19.cxb7+ Kxb7; 20.Qc2 and White had enough material to hold a decisive advantage, though Black did manage to draw eventually, Bologan–Shirov, Dresden 1997.

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 5

Option 2: 5.Bc4



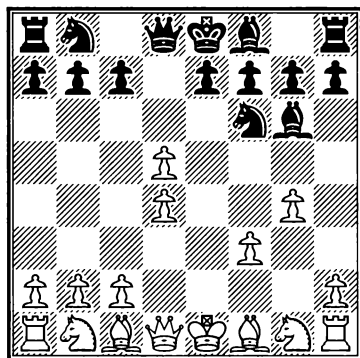
## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

This gives us plenty of time to support the d5-square. 5...Nxd5; 6.Nc3 e6; 7.Nge2 Nc6; 8.Bb5 Qd7; 9.Ne4 a6; 10.Ba4 Nb6; 11.Bb3 0-0; 12.c3 e5; 13.Be3 Nd5; 14.Bf2 exd4; 15.Nxd4 Nf4 and White is certainly worse, Horn – Liardet, Geneva 1996.

### PORTUGUESE VARIATIONS, MOVE 5

#### Option 3: 5.g4

The bishop is driven back, but White's kingside is weakened. 5...Bg6.



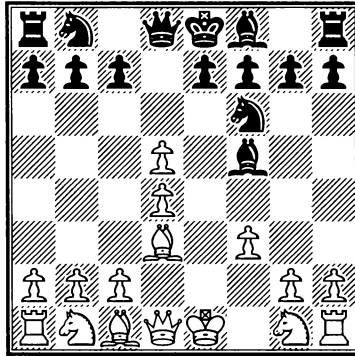
A) 6.Bb5+ Nbd7; 7.c4 leaves the bishop out in left field. We can force it from the board with 7...a6, where 8.Ba4 is not good because of 8...b5; 9.cxb5 Nxd5. For example: 10.Nc3 Nb4; 11.Ne4 axb5; 12.Bxb5 c6; 13.Qb3 e5; 14.Bd2 Bxe4; 15.Bxb4 Qh4+; 16.Kf1 Bxb4; 17.fxe4 cxb5; 18.Qxb4 Qxg4; 19.Kf2 Qh4+; 20.Kg2 Qxe4+; 21.Nf3 Qe2+; 22.Kg3 Ra6; 23.dxe5 Nxe5 and Black won, Richard – Van de Voort, Germany 1989. So, White must try 8.Bxd7+ Qxd7; 9.Nc3 e6; 10.dxe6 (10.Qe2 0-0-0; 11.g5 Ng8; 12.h4 Bb4; 13.Qe5 f6; 14.dxe6 Qxd4; 15.Qxd4 Rxd4; 16.Nge2 Rxc4 worked out well for Black in a game from the World Microcomputer Championship 1995.) 10...Qxe6+; 11.Qe2 Bd3; 12.Qxe6+ fxe6; 13.b3 0-0-0; 14.Nge2 c5; 15.Be3 cxd4; 16.Bxd4 e5; 17.Bb6 Re8; 18.Rd1 e4; 19.fxe4 Bxe2; 20.Kxe2 Bb4; 21.Kd3 Re6; 22.Bd4 Bxc3; 23.Kxc3 Nxc4; 24.Bxc3 Rxc4; 25.Bd4 Rxe4 and Black had a good game in Feoktistov – Ulko, Moscow 1996.

B) 6.c4 is handled by 6...e6; 7.g5 Nh5; 8.dxe6 Bb4+; 9.Bd2 Bxd2+; 10.Qxd2 fxe6; 11.Ne2 0-0; 12.Bg2 c5 provides counterplay, for example 13.Bh3 Rxf3; 14.Bxe6+ Kh8; 15.d5 Rd3; 16.Qc1 Nd7;

threatening...Ne5, so 17.Bxd7 Qxd7; 18.Nbc3 Qg4! and the game is all but over.

**PORTUGUESE VARIATIONS, MOVE 5**

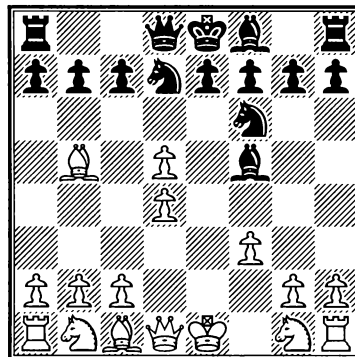
**Option 4: 5.Bd3**



This straightforward developing plan is met by our usual strategy of queenside castling: 5...Qxd5; 6.Ne2 Nc6; 7.a3 0-0-0; 8.c4 Qd7; 9.Be3 Ne5; 10.dxe5 Qxd3; 11.Qxd3 Rxd3; 12.Bf4 Nd7; 13.0-0 g5; 14.Bg3 e6; 15.Rc1 Bg7; 16.Nbc3 Rd2; 17.Nb5 a6; 18.Nbc3 Nxe5 and Black cruised to victory in Coste - Chaplin, Paris 1990.

***Returning to the Main Line***

5...Nbd7; 6.Nc3. We could of course retreat the bishop, but why would we want to do that?



## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

White makes a serious attempt to hold on to the pawn. It is about time to attend to development!

The primary alternative is 6.c4. As is so often the case in the Scandinavian, White should resist the temptation to advance the c-pawn in a vain attempt to hold on to material. Instead, simple development is the best plan. The other alternative is 6.Ne2, though that is nothing to worry about, either.

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 6

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.d4 Bg4 4.f3 Bf5 5.Bb5+ Nbd7 6.Nc3

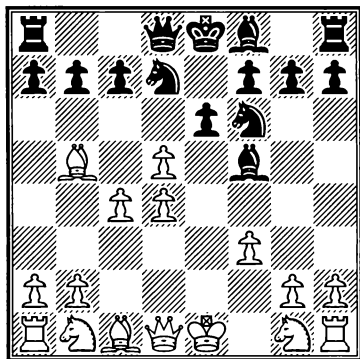
Option 1: 6.c4

Option 2: 6.Ne2

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 6

#### Option 1: 6.c4

6...e6 is our reply. This move is a typical resource in the Richter and Icelandic gambits. Yet the line is a mere footnote in the 1997 edition of the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings*!

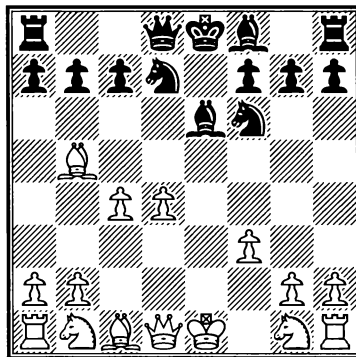


Although the capture at e6 is most common, the immediate g4 can be dangerous, too.

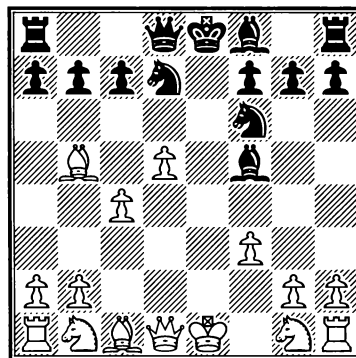
A) 7.g4 Bxb1; 8.dxe6 fxe6; 9.Rxb1 c6; 10.Ba4 Bb4+; 11.Bd2 Qa5; (11...Nxg4? does not quite succeed. 12.Bxb4 Qh4+; 13.Ke2 Qf2+; 14.Kd3 Nde5+ 15.Kc3 a5; 16.Bc5 Qe3+; 17.Kc2 Nf2; 18.Qe2 Nxc4;

19.Qxc4 h5; 20.Qe2 Qxe2+; 21.Nxe2 Nxh1; 22.Bb3 Kf7; 23.Nf4 Rhe8  
 24.Rxh1 a4; 25.Bxe6+ Rxe6; 26.Nxe6 Kxe6; 27.Re1+, 1-0 Rodriguez  
 Uria – Ribeiro, Candas 1992). 12.Bb3 0-0-0; 13.Bxb4 Qxb4+; 14.Qd2  
 Qxd2+; 15.Kxd2 e5; 16.g5! Nh5; 17.Ne2 Nc5; 18.Kc3 Nxb3; 19.axb3  
 Rhf8 with plenty of counterplay.

B) 7.dxe6 is obviously met by 7...Bxe6.



B1) 8.d5 Bf5 is the approved line and now:



B1a) 9.Be3 Bb4+; 10.Nc3 (10.Bd2 Qe7+; 11.Qe2 0-0-0; 12.Qxe7 Bxe7 and Black's superior development, combined with White's awkward piece placement, give Black compensation for the pawn.) 10...0-0; 11.Bxd7 Nxd7; 12.Bd4 Re8+; 13.Nge2 Nc5; 14.0-0 Bd3 and Black has more than enough pressure for the pawn, Stevanec – Carvalho, World Girls Junior Championship 1996.

B1b) 9.Ne2 Bc5; 10.Ng3 Bg6; 11.Qe2+ Kf8; 12.Be3 Qe7; 13.Bxc5 Qxc5; 14.Bxd7 Nxd7; 15.Ne4 Qb4+ (15...Qd4; 16.Nbc3 f5;

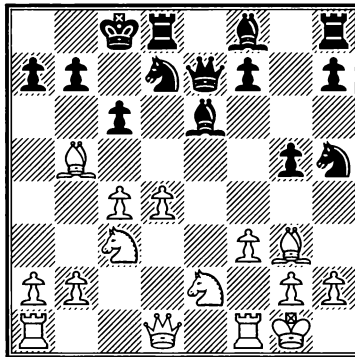
## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

17.Rd1 Qb6; 18.Ng5 and White has a clear advantage, Tindall – Cukier, World Junior Championship 1996.) 16.Nbc3 Ne5; 17.0-0-0 Qxc4; 18.Qxc4 Nxc4 with an even game.

B1c) 9.Nc3! is best, and has been used by Judith Polgar. 9...Be7! (*ECO* gives only the inferior 9...Bc5.) 10.g4 Bg6; 11.f4 h6; 12.f5 Bh7; 13.h3 0-0; 14.Bf4 Nc5; 15.Qf3 a6; 16.Ba4 Nxa4; 17.Nxa4 Qe8; 18.Nc3 Ba3+; 19.Kf1 Bxb2; 20.Re1 Qd7; 21.Nge2 b5 (21...Rfe8! would have tied down White's forces, with unclear prospects.) 22.Nd1 Ba1; 23.Nf2 bxc4; 24.Rxa1 Nxd5; 25.Rd1 c6; 26.Qg2 and White eventually prevailed in J. Polgar-Damaso, Oveido 1992.

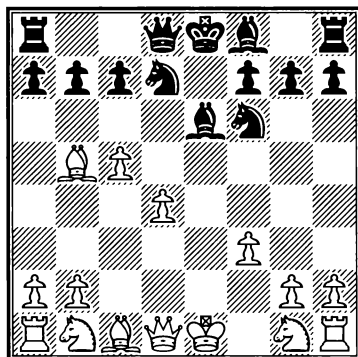
The idea of bringing the knight to c3 is also featured in the next variation.

B2) 8.Nc3 Qe7; 9.Nge2 0-0-0; 10.0-0 c6; 11.Bf4 g5; 12.Bg3 Nh5.



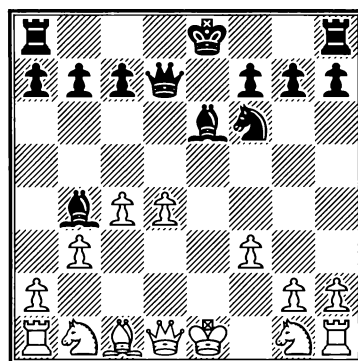
White embarks on a sacrificial journey, but there is no reward at the end. 13.Bxc6 bxc6; 14.Qa4 Nb8; 15.Bxb8 Kxb8; 16.Qxc6 Qb7; (16...Rc8; 17.Qb5+ Ka8; and Black is better.) 17.Qxb7+ Kxb7; 18.d5 Bc8; 19.b4 Bg7. Black's pieces are better than the pawns.

B3) 8.c5 is perhaps the strongest move.



Advancing the c-pawn just looks aggressive. It isn't too scary, because it gives up control of the d5-square. **8...c6; 9.Bd3** (9.Ba4 Nd5; 10.Nc3 Qh4+; 11.g3 Qh5; 12.Nxd5 Bxd5; 13.Qe2+ Be7; 14.Kf2 Nf8; 15.Bb3 Ne6 was fine for Black in Diaz – Sariego, Cuba 1995. Black has compensation for the weak d-pawn.) **9...b6; 10.cxb6 Qxb6; 11.Ne2 c5; 12.d5** (12.0-0 cxd4; 13.Nf4 Bd6; 14.Nxe6 fxe6; 15.Qb3 Nc5; 16.Qxb6 axb6; 17.Bb5+ Ke7 with a level game in Shaked – Cukier, Halle World Junior Championship 1995.) **12...Nxd5; 13.Na3 Qb4+; 14.Bd2 Qxb2; 15.Nc4 Qf6; 16.0-0 Be7** is Vitor– Santos, Lisbon 1994, where Black holds the extra pawn.

B4) 8.Bxd7+ is harmless, for example 8...Qxd7; 9.b3 Bb4+!, suggested by Spraggett.

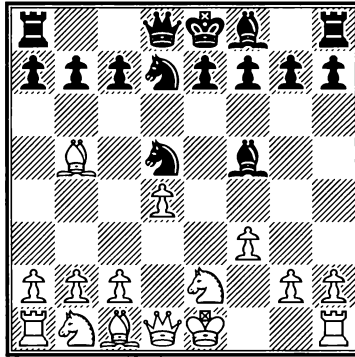


White has to move the king now, in order to save the pawn at d4.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

### PORTUGUESE VARIATION, MOVE 6

Option 2: 6.Ne2.



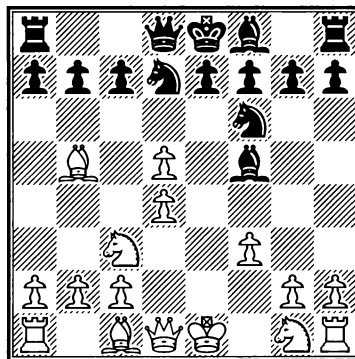
Black can set up a very solid position, and then can target the weak White kingside.

A) 7.0-0 c6; 8.Bd3 Bxd3; 9.Qxd3 e6; 10.c4 N5f6; 11.Nbc3 Ne5; 12.Qc2 Nxc4; 13.Qb3 Nd6. Black has the better structure, Garcia – Galego, Capablanca Memorial 1995.

B) 7.c3 e6; 8.0-0 c6; 9.Bd3 Qf6; 10.Ng3 Bxd3; 11.Qxd3 Herold – Fecke, Germany 1996. After 11...0-0-0 Black would have an enjoyable game.

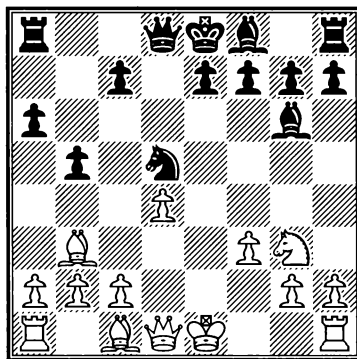
### *Returning to the Main Linez*

So the deployment of the knight with 6.Nc3 is no worse than the alternatives.



Here we can drive the bishop back. 6...a6; 7.Ba4.

Unimpressive is 7.Bd3 Bxd3; 8.Qxd3 Nb6; 9.Nge2 Nfxd5, which gave Black no problems in Nikitin–Ulko, Moscow 1994. 7...b5; 8.Bb3 Nb6; 9.Nge2 Nbx d5 10.Nxd5 Nxd5; 11.Ng3 Bg6.

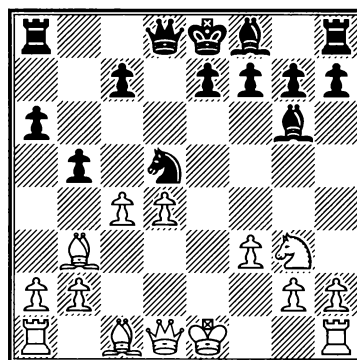


Black's bishop at g6 is safer and stronger than the one at b3.

**12.c4.** Now White should advance the c-pawn, not for materialistic goals but to achieve pressure against b5 and d5.

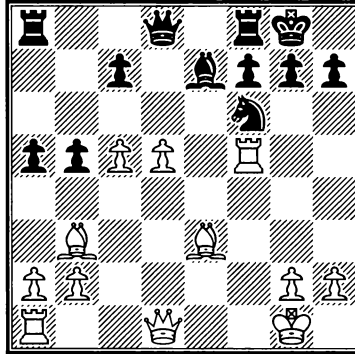
The leading alternative is 12.f4, which aims to strangle the bishop at g6. Black prevents this with 12...e6 and now 13.f5 (13.Qf3 13...c6 14.f5 exf5; 15.0-0 Bd6; 16.Re1+ Kf8; 17.Bxd5 cxd5; 18.Bf4 Bxf4; 19.Qxf4 Qd7 is equal.) 13...Bb4+! (13...exf5; 14.0-0 f4; 15.Nh5 c5; 16.Re1+ Be7; 17.dxc5 and Black had too many problems to solve, Georgiev – Jadoul, Belfort 1989.) 14.c3 Nxc3; 15.bxc3 Bxc3+; 16.Bd2 Qxd4 (16...Bxa1; 17.Qxa1 exf5; 18.0-0 0-0; 19.Nxf5 Qd7 is no worse for Black.) 17.Rc1 Qe3+; 18.Ne2 Bxd2+; 19.Qxd2 Qxd2+; 20.Kxd2 0-0+; 21.Ke3 exf5 with four extra pawns.

Returning to the main line, we see Black's knight under assault.



## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • PORTUGUESE VARIATION

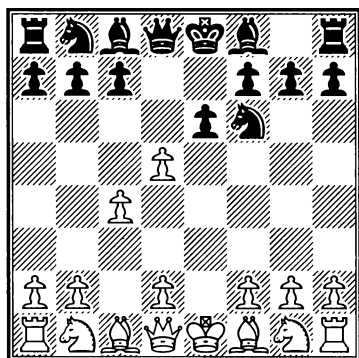
This allows White to advance further down the c-file, though this plan does concede the d5 square. 12...Nb6; 13.c5 Nd5; 14.0-0 e6; 15.f4 Be7! 15...f5; 16.Qe2 was a little better for White in Duggan-Pullinger, St.Heliers 1997. Even stronger is 16.Re1! 16.f5 Bxf5; 17.Nxf5 exf5; 18.Rxf5 Nf6; 19.Be3 0-0; 20.d5 a5.



Black has plenty of counterplay. The pawns at c5 and d5 are adequately defended but they will always need watching, and Black's queenside advances threaten to undermine the defense. Our gambit strategy has led to a middlegame with even material and chances for both sides.

# SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE

## • ICELANDIC GAMBIT •



### OPENING MOVES

- 1.e4 d5
- 2.exd5 Nf6
- 3.c4 e6

## OVERVIEW

This is the **Icelandic Gambit**, one of the most aggressive lines of the Scandinavian Defense. It rose in prominence in the 1980s as an alternative to 3...c6, which usually transposes to the Panov Attack of the Caro-Kann. That is of course a reasonable option for Black, but it is hardly in the spirit of gambit play, though the fianchetto variation 4.d4 cxd5; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.cxd5 does offer a pawn.

Otto Hardy, British theoretician, analyzed the opening in detail, and much of the material presented below derives from his analysis. Normally White will capture at e6, and we will follow that move as our main line.

White can bravely capture the pawn at e6, or play more positionally and allow Black to regain the pawn without a struggle. The tempo of development is very important, and both sides must be careful not to lag too far behind.

### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE *Icelandic Gambit*

<b>4...dxe6</b>	
<i>Options at move 4:</i>	<b>61</b>
Option 1: 4.d4	61
Option 2: 4.Qa4+	62
Option 3: 4.Nc3	63
Option 4: 4.d6	64
<b>4...Bxe6; 5.d4</b>	
<i>Options at move 5:</i>	<b>65</b>
Option 1: 5.Nf3	65
Option 2: 5.Be2	67
Option 3: 5.Nc3	71
<b>5...Bb4+; Bd2</b>	
<i>Option at move 6:</i>	<b>73</b>
Option 1: 6.Nc3	73
<b>Four Options</b>	
<i>Options at move 7:</i>	<b>79</b>
Option 1: 7.Bxb4	80
Option 2: 7.Qe2	83
Option 3: 7.Nc3	84
Option 4: 7.Be2.	84

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

### 4.dxe6.

There are four alternatives which we must explore. The immediate 4.d4 is met by the simple capture at d5. 4.Nc3 is met in similar fashion. If White checks at a4 with the queen, then Black just chases her away with...Bd7. The final option, 4.d6, is pointless and Black just removes the pawn.

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT - OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 4

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.dxe6

Option 1: 4.d4

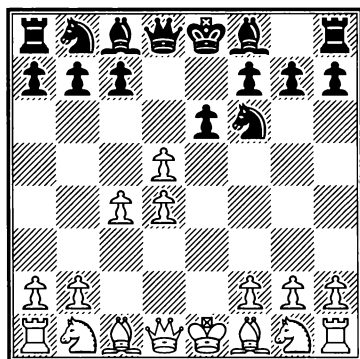
Option 2: 4.Qa4+

Option 3: 4.Nc3

Option 4: 4.d6

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 4

#### Option 1: 4.d4



There is no reason to be afraid of this move, which simply returns the pawn. **4...exd5.**

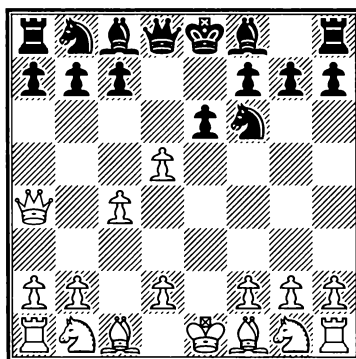
A) 5.Nc3. Black has two good plans here. 5...g6; 6.cxd5 transposes to the Panov Attack of the Caro-Kann. See the bibliography for more information on this solid line, which gives White custody of the pawn for a long time but provides interesting counterplay. 5...Nc6 6.c5 (6.Nf3 Bb4; 7.cxd5 Nxd5 is pleasant for Black, since 8.Bc4 fails to 8...Nxc3; 9.bxc3 Bxc3+; 10.Bd2 Qe7+; 11.Be2 Bxa1; 12.Qxa1 0-0.) 6...Be7; 7.Nf3 0-0; 8.Be2 Ne4; 9.0-0 Bg4; 10.Be3 f5 and Black has a good game.

B) 5.Nf3 Bb4+; 6.Bd2 Bxd2+; 7.Nbxd2 0-0; 8.Be2 Re8; 9.0-0 Nc6; 10.h3 Bf5; gave Black a pleasant game in Orlov-Sivokho, St.Petersburg 1996. 5.Bg5 Bb4+; 6.Nc3 0-0; 7.cxd5 Qe8+; 8.Be2 Nxd5; with strong pressure on the e-file and on the a8-e1 diagonal, Toth - Eberth, Heves 1988.

C) 5.Bd3 Be7; 6.Nf3 0-0; 7.0-0 Nc6; 8.h3 Nb4; 9.Nc3 Nxd3; 10.Qxd3 dxc4; 11.Qxc4 Be6 with a structural advantage for Black and the bishop pair, Ginger - De Coverly, England 1990.

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 4

#### Option 2: 4.Qa4+

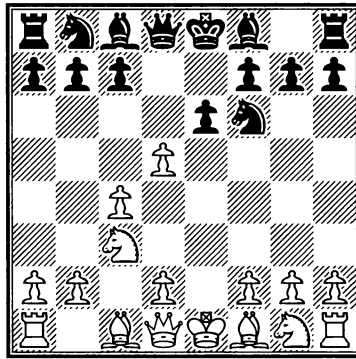


An early queen check is usually justified only when recovering a Black pawn at c4, so here it is just a waste of time. 4...Bd7; 5.Qb3 Na6! offers yet another pawn, but it is a poisoned pawn with fatal consequences. 6.Qxb7 (6.d4 exd5; 7.Nf3 Bb4+; 8.Nc3 0-0; 9.cxd5 Re8+; 10.Be3 Ng4; and Black has a strong initiative. 11.Bxa6 Bxc3+; 12.bxc3 bxa6 with two useful open files for Black rooks.) 6...Nc5; 7.Qb4 Nd3+; 8.Bxd3 Bxb4.

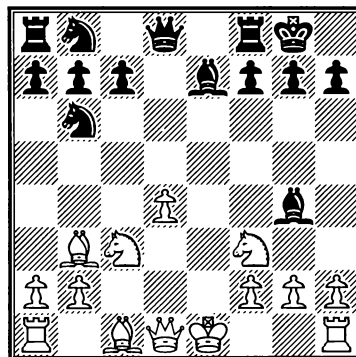
## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 4

#### Option 3: 4.Nc3



Defending the pawn at d5 is hopeless. 4...exd5; 5.cxd5 (5.d4 transposes above to 4.d4 exd5; 5.Nc3.) 5...Nxd5; 6.d4 (6.Nf3 Nxc3; 7.bxc3 Bd6; 8.Be2 0-0; 9.0-0 Re8; 10.d4 Bf5 with a comfortable game for Black. 6.Bc4 Nb6; 7.Bb3 Be7; 8.Qf3 0-0; 9.Nge2 Nc6; 10.d4 Nxd4; 11.Nxd4 Qxd4 and Black has an extra pawn, Ubeira – Forestani, Mar del Plata 1992. 6.Nxd5 Qxd5; 7.Nf3 Bd6; 8.Be2 0-0; 9.0-0 Nc6; 10.Qc2 Bf5; 11.Qc4 Qa5. White has no compensation for the inferior pawn structure, Singh – Vann, Open 1995.) 6...Be7; 7.Bc4 Nb6; 8.Bb3 0-0; 9.Nf3 (9.Nge2 N8d7; 10.0-0 Nf6; 11.Bf4 c6; 12.Qd3 Nbd5; 13.Be5 Be6; 14.Qg3, Kveinys – Oswald, Bundesliga 1994. 14...Re8 was the best defense. White has no advantage here.) 9...Bg4 with two branches.



A) 10.h3 Bxf3; 11.Qxf3 Nc6; 12.Be3 Nxd4; 13.Qxb7 Nxb3! (13...Bc5; 14.Bxd4 Re8+; 15.Be3 Qd3 is what Black must avoid, as

[chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

White is allowed to attack effectively. 16.Bxf7+ Kxf7; as in Cranbourne – Scarella, Buenos Aires 1992, where 17.Qxc7+ Be7; 18.Rd1 would have been winning for White.) 14.axb3 Rb8; 15.Qf3 Nc8! defends the pawn at a7 and opens up a line of attack against the pawn at b3.

B) 10.0-0 10...Nc6; 11.Be3 Rb8; 12.Rc1 Bf6; 13.h3 Bxf3; 14.Qxf3 Nxd4; 15.Bxd4 Bxd4 and White has no real compensation for the pawn, Visser-S.Lalic, Haarlem 1996.

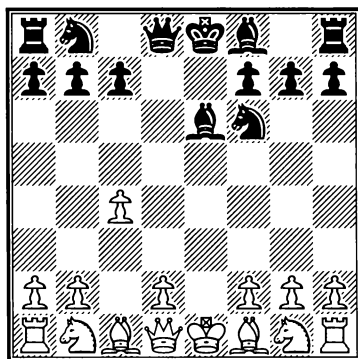
## **ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 4**

### **Option 4: 4.d6**

**4.d6** is one remaining try, but Black has nothing to fear here. 4...c5; 5.Nf3 Nc6; 6.Nc3 Bxd6; 7.d4 0-0; 8.Be2 b6; 9.dxc5 Bxc5; 10.0-0 Bb7; 11.a3 a5; 12.Bg5 h6; 13.Bh4 Qe7; 14.Na4 was agreed drawn in Voronova – Svobodova, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

### *Returning to the Main Line*

We now return to the main line, where Black responds to the capture at e6 by recapturing with the bishop: **4...Bxe6**.



In return for the pawn, Black has two pieces developed, while White's forces lie useless. But there is added positional compensation. White's d-pawn must advance to d4 or remain backward because Black will quickly play...Nc6 and control d4, yet the advance of the d-pawn allows the Black bishop at f8 to develop with check at b4.

**5.d4.** This is not the only move, but if White fails to get the pawn to d4 quickly, it may never reach that useful square. White can develop bishop or queen to e2, or develop a knight, or even try 5.b3. We will look at those plans. The 5.Be2 line is important, but is still less common than the obvious advance of the d-pawn.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT - OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 5

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.dxe6 Bxe6 5.d4

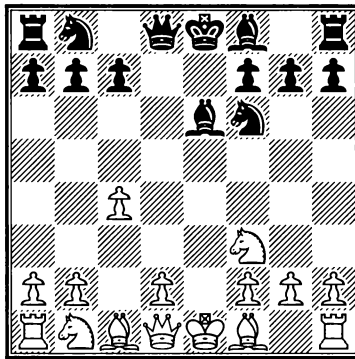
Option 1: 5.Nf3

Option 2: 5.Be2

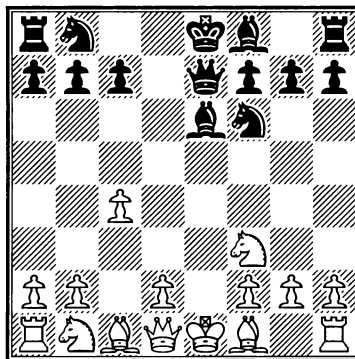
Option 3: 5.Nc3

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 5

#### Option 1: 5.Nf3

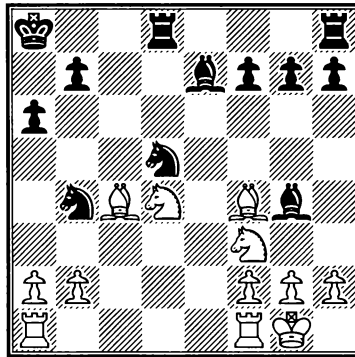


This is preferred by *ECO* and Susan Lalic in her 1997 *Trends in the Scandinavian, Vol. 2*. Black can now try the wild 5...c5 or calm 5...Nc6, but we will focus on the more obscure 5...Qe7, which is truly off the beaten path. It is not even mentioned in *ECO*.



White must deal with the threat of a discovered check on the e-file.

A) 6.Qe2 Nc6; 7.d4 (7.d3 0-0-0; 8.a3 Bf5; 9.d4 Rxd4; 10.Qxe7 Bxe7; 11.Be3 Rd7; 12.h3 Rhd8 was drawn in Dolezal – Jandecka, Klatovy Cup 1996.) 7...Bg4; 8.Qxe7+ (8.Be3 0-0-0; 9.d5 Ne5; 10.Nbd2 c6 is very good for Black. Look at what can happen if White is not careful: 11.dxc6 Nd3+; 12.Kd1 Nxb2+; 13.Kc2 Bf5+; 14.Kxb2 Qa3#!) 8...Bxe7; 9.Be3 0-0-0; 10.d5 Nb4; 11.Na3 c6; (11...Bf5 is suggested by Hardy.) 12.Be2 cxd5; 13.0-0 Kb8; 14.Nb5 a6; 15.Bf4+ Ka8; 16.Nbd4 dxc4; 17.Bxc4 Nfd5.

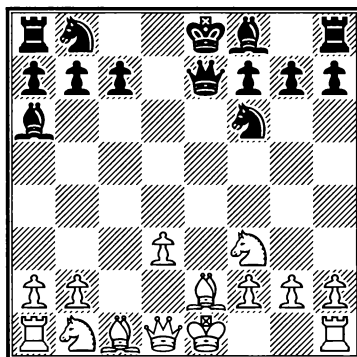


Black is slightly better thanks to the more active pieces, Frois-Almeida, Almada 1988.

B) 6.d4 Bxc4+; 7.Be3 Bxf1; 8.Kxf1 Qe6 and White's position is a mess, Berend – Khaled, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988.

C) 6.Be2 Bxc4; 7.d3 (7.Nc3 Bxe2; 8.Nxe2 g6; 9.Qb3 c6; 10.d4 Qb4+; 11.Qxb4 Bxb4+; 12.Bd2 Na6; 13.Bxb4 Nxb4; 14.0-0 0-0-0. Black has the more active position, Ageichenko – Maljutin, Moscow 1991.) 7...Ba6.

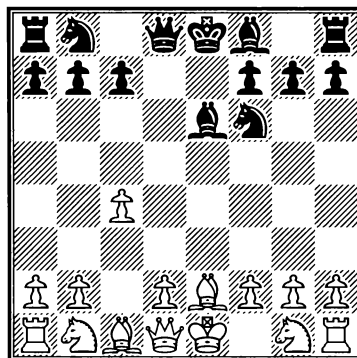
## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT



This line was worked out by Russian trainer Felix Levin, who qualified to become a Grandmaster in 1997. 8.0–0 Qd6; 9.Re1 (9.Na3 Be7; 10.Nc4 Qd8; 11.b3 0–0; 12.Bb2 Nd5; 13.g3 Nd7; 14.Rc1 Re8; 15.d4 c6; 16.Nfe5 Nf8 with a solid defense for Black, who can later go to work against White's weak d-pawn. Bancod – Levin, Nuernberg 1996.) 9...Be7; 10.b4 0–0; 11.a4 b6; 12.Ba3 Qd8; 13.Nc3 Bb7 and Black is better, because White's pawn at d3 is terrible, Kuijf – Levin, Bundesliga 1996.

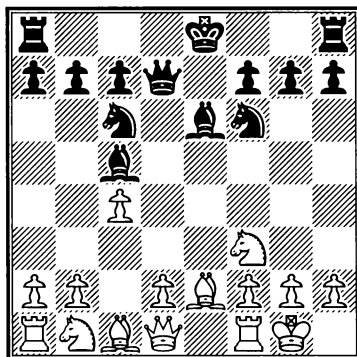
### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 5

#### Option 2: 5.Be2



White plans to castle as quickly as possible. Black usually continues with development: 5...Nc6 (5...c5 is an option for the adventurous.) 6.Nf3 Bc5; 7.0–0 (7.a3 0–0; 8.0–0 Re8; 9.b4 Bd4 gives Black good counterplay. Then 10.Nxd4 Qxd4; 11.Nc3 Bxc4 is clearly no

problem for Black.) 7...Qd7.

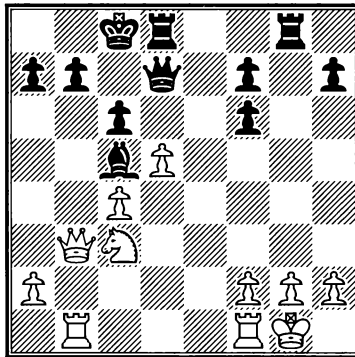


The stage is set for an opposite wing contest, after Black castles on the queenside.

A) 8.a3 Nd4; 9.Nxd4 (9.b3 Bf5; 10.b4 Bc2; 11.Qe1 0-0; 12.Bb2 Rae8; 13.Bxd4 Bxd4; 14.Nxd4 Qxd4; 15.Nc3 Bd3; 16.c5 Bxe2; 17.Nxe2 Qc4; and White had a hopeless position in Bromman – Skytte, Copenhagen (Politiken) 1996.) 9...Qxd4; 10.Nc3 Qh4; 11.Nb5 0-0-0; 12.b4 Bd4; 13.Rb1 Ng4; 14.Bxg4 Bxg4; 15.Qc2 Be2; 16.Qf5+ Kb8; 17.g3 Qh6; 18.d3 Qc6; 19.Nxd4 Rxd4; 20.b5 Qd6; 21.Bf4 Rxf4; 22.Qxf4 Qxf4; 23.gxf4 Bxd3; 24.c5 Bxb1; 25.Rxb1 and Black had a better endgame in Martens – Rocha, 1994.

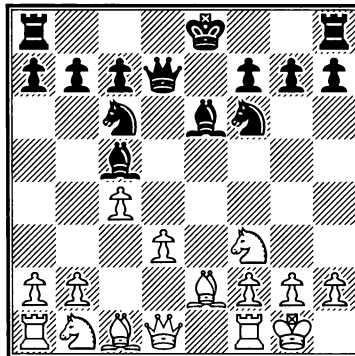
B) 8.b4 Bxb4; 9.d4 Bg4; 10.d5 Bxf3; 11.Bxf3 Ne5; 12.Bb2 Nxf3+; 13.Qxf3 0-0-0. White should probably just develop here but could not resist the opportunity to break apart Black's kingside pawn formation. At the same time, however, this opens up a highway to the White king. In any case, it is hard to find anything convincing for White here. 14.Bxf6 gxf6; 15.Nc3 Rhg8; 16.Rab1 Bf8; 17.Nb5 Bc5; 18.Qb3 c6; 19.Nc3.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT



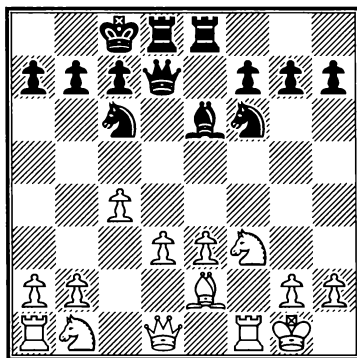
Now Black wins an important pawn with a pretty sacrifice. 19...Rxcg2+; 20.Kh1 (20.Kxg2 Qg4+; 21.Kh1 Qf3+; 22.Kg1 Rg8#) 20...Rg6; 21.Ne4 Bf8; 22.Rfd1 Re8; 23.f3 f5; 24.Ng3 f4; 25.Ne4 f5; 26.Qa4. Desperation. 26...fxe4; 27.Qxa7 Bd6 and Black was a piece ahead with a strong attack, in Weston – Bryson, Castlehill 1994.

C) 8.d3! is the best move, giving the White forces some breathing room.



8...0-0-0; 9.Be3 (9.Nbd2 Ng4; 10.Ne4 Be7; 11.b3 Nge5; 12.Nxe5 Nxe5; 13.Bb2 Nc6; 14.Qd2 Rhe8; 15.Rfe1 Nd4; 16.Bf1 h6; 17.Bxd4 Qxd4; 18.Qe3 Bb4; 19.Qxd4 Rxd4; 20.Red1 Bf5. Black has enough pressure to compensate for the missing pawn. Or 14.Bxg7 Rhg8; 15.Bc3 Nd4; 16.Bf3, suggested by A. Bean, where I think that 16...f5 gives Black at least enough compensation for one pawn.) The bishop pair is powerful while White's bishop at f1 is relegated to the defense of a lowly pawn, Donguines – Hsu, Genting Heights 1995.) 9...Bxe3

10.fxe3. Black can play 10...Ng4 but now 11.Qc1 Rhe8; 12.Nc3 Nce5 13.Nxe5 Nxe5; 14.d4 and White has the advantage, Sievers-Breutigam, Germany 1991. 10...Rhe8 is more cunning. Black now threatens to move the bishop from e6 and expose the pawn at e3 to attack.



White must still deal with development of the knight from b1, and there are three options. Each must be handled in a different way.

C1) 11.Nbd2 Black will play 11...Ng4! and White cannot defend e3 with the queen.

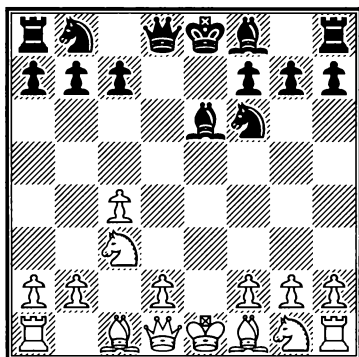
C2) 11.Nc3 Bg4; 12.Qd2 Qe7 and both the e-pawn and d-pawn need defense. The rather awkward plan 13.Nd1 and here Black can try 13...Ne4; 14.Qc2 Nb4; 15.Qa4 Nd2; 16.Rf2 Bxf3; 17.Bxf3 Nxf3+; 18.Rxf3 Rxd3; 19.Qxa7 Nc6; 20.Qa8+ Nb8 and although Black is still a pawn down, the knight at b8 provides ample defense, and the heavy artillery is free to fire at the weak pawns at c4 and e3. 21.Qa5 threatens to win a pawn with Qf5+, but Black can play 21...g6; 22.Nc3 f5; 23.Nd5 Qe5 and it is not easy to see how White will make progress.

C3) 11.Na3 is best met by 11...Bf5, for example 12.e4 Qe7!?

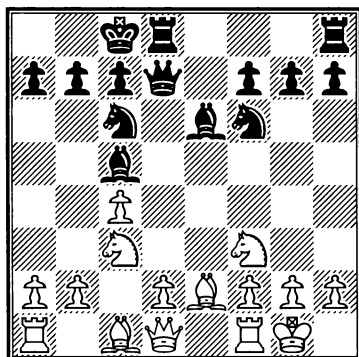
## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

### ICELANDING GAMBIT, MOVE 5

#### Option 3: 5.Nc3

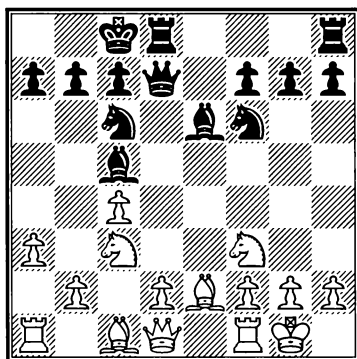


This can be merely transpositional, if White then returns to kingside development. The best line for Black is 5...Bc5; 6.Nf3 Nc6; 7.Be2 Qd7; 8.0-0 0-0-0.



This is a similar line to the one just given. White does not achieve anything by harassing the bishop. 9.Na4 Bd4; 10.d3 Rhe8; 11.Bf4 Bf5; 12.Re1 Ng4; 13.Bg3 Nge5; 14.Nxd4 Nxd4; 15.Nc3 Bxd3; 16.Bg4 Nxg4; 17.Qxd3 Ne2+; 18.Qxe2 Rxe2; 19.Rxe2 Re8; 20.Rxe8+ Qxe8 and Black had a material advantage in Brunner – Manor, Bern 1990.

9.a3 is a more promising method of playing the queenside battle-field.



A) 9...g5 is an interesting move, for example 10.b4 (10.Nxg5, accepting the offer, is bolder and yet probably correct.) 10...Bd4; 11.b5 Ne5; 12.Qa4 Nxf3+; 13.Bxf3 g4; 14.Be2 Rdg8; 15.Bb2 g3; 16.hxg3 Rxc3; 17.b6 Rxc2+; 18.Kxg2 Rg8+; 19.Kh2 Qd6+; 20.f4 Ng4+; 21.Kg3 Ne5+ and White resigned in Berg – Johnsen, Gausdal (Troll) 1996.

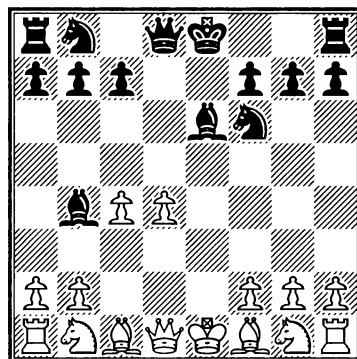
B) 9...Rhe8; 10.b4 Bd4; 11.Bb2 Bg4; Black's pieces are very active here. 12.Rb1 Bf5; 13.Rc1 Ne4; 14.b5 Ne5; 15.Nxe5 Rxe5; 16.d3 Nxf2; 17.Rxf2 Bxf2+; 18.Kxf2 Qd4+; 19.Kf1 Rxe2; 20.Nxe2 Qxb2 and White was unable to survive in Daniliuk – Ulko, Moscow 1995.

Another line: 5.b3 Bc5; 6.Bb2 Ne4; 7.d4 Bb4+; 8.Ke2 Qe7; 9.f3 Bxc4+; 10.bxc4 Nc3+; 11.Kd2 Nxd1+; 12.Kxd1 Qe1+; 13.Kc2 Qxf1 and White resigned in Tabakovic – Karlsson, Stockholm 1994.

Therefore Black has nothing to worry about if White refrains from 5.d4. All that remains is to deal with the main line.

*Returning to the Main Line*

5...Bb4+.



## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

White can interpose bishop or knight here, but in either case the initiative will remain with Black, at least temporarily.

### 6.Bd2.

The only serious alternative is bringing the knight to c3, as 6.Nbd2 would just clog things up. We will examine 6.Nc3 before continuing.

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT - OPTION FOR WHITE AT MOVE 6

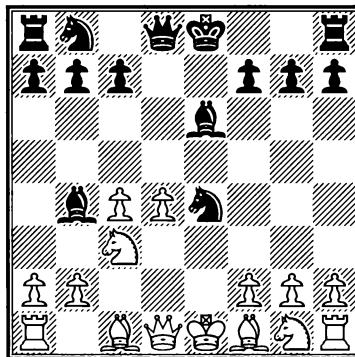
1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.dxe6 Bxe6 5.d4 Bb4+ 6.Bd2

Option 1: 6.Nc3

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 6

#### Option 1: 6.Nc3

Can be met by 6...Ne4, which adds to the pressure at c3.



White can try many different plans here, including returning the pawn to gain time. Black will eventually exchange minor pieces at c3 and disrupt White's pawn structure but should not be in any hurry to do so. There are six tries. Five of them can be dismissed rather easily. So, taking **7.Qd3!** as our main line, let's dispense with the alternatives.

A) 7.Qf3 Qxd4; 8.Nge2 Qxc4; 9.a3 Nxc3; 10.Nxc3 Bxc3+; 11.bxc3 Qd5. Black has a decisive advantage, Scheipl – Feistenauer, Dornbirn 1988.

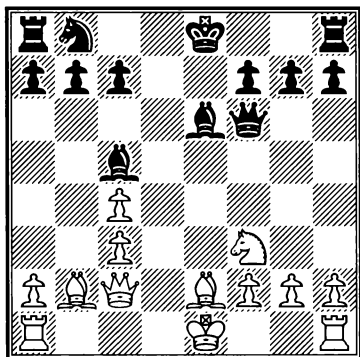
B) 7.d5? Qf6; 8.Nf3 Nxc3; 9.bxc3 Bxc3+; 10.Bd2 Bxa1; 11.Bg5 Bc3+; 12.Ke2 Qg6; 13.Qb3 Bg4; 14.h4 Qe4+; 15.Be3 Ba5; 16.Qa4+



## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

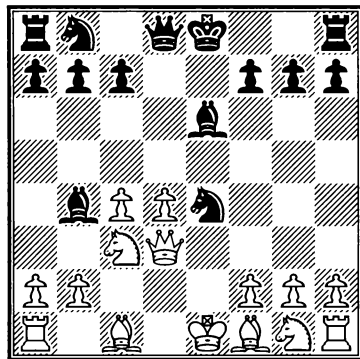
better, Roeder – Bischoff, Mengen 1990.

E) 7.Qc2 is not quite as good as Qd3 because the d4-square is not protected and Black can play 7...Nxc3; 8.bxc3 Qxd4; 9.Bb2 Qe5+; 10.Be2 Bc5; 11.Nf3 Qf6.



Black has the more active bishops and healthier pawn structure. 12.0-0 Nc6; 13.Rad1 0-0; 14.Nd4 Rad8; 15.Nxe6 fxe6; 16.Rxd8 Bxf2+; 17.Kh1 Qxd8; 18.Bg4 Bc5; 19.Bxe6+ Kh8; 20.Rxf8+ Qxf8. The position looks like it has calmed down, but the White king is still vulnerable. 21.Qe2 Ne5; 22.Bc1 Qd6; 23.Bc8 Qd3; 24.Qe1 Qd8; 25.Be6 Nd3; 26.Qf1 Nf2+; 27.Kg1 Qd6 and White gave up in Pacl – Maljutin, Karvina 1992.

So, we now examine 7.Qd3 which is White's best move. It protects both pawns while attacking the knight at e4.

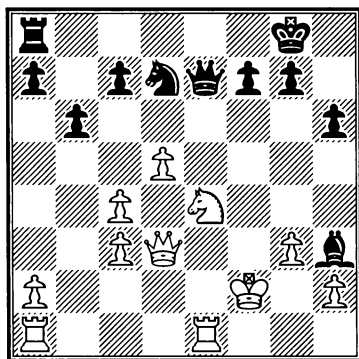


Black can create more threats, however with 7...Bf5 and the complications are no worse for Black. Fortunately, there is plenty of prac-

tical experience to help sort things out. White's most promising plan is to nudge the bishop by advancing the a-pawn. **8.a3** will be our main line. There are three other moves to look at first.

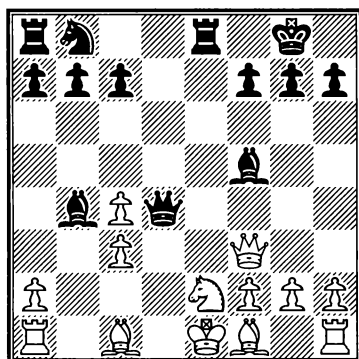
F1) 8.Qf3 Qxd4; 9.Nge2 Qd7; 10.a3 Nc6; 11.Bf4 Ne5; 12.Qe3 Nd3+; 13.Kd1 Bc5 and Black won, Ruxton – Hsu, Tunha 1989.

F2) 8.Nge2 0-0!; 9.Qf3 Re8! Black's last two moves are very strong, creating new possibilities along the e-file. White has difficulty getting the king to safety. 10.Be3 Nxc3; 11.bxc3 Be4; 12.Qh5 Ba3; 13.Qa5 (13.Rd1 Nd7; 14.Ng3 Bg6; 15.Qb5 b6 and Black's position is to be preferred.) 13...Bd6; 14.Ng3 b6; 15.Qa4 Bc6; 16.Qc2 Bf4; 17.d5 Bd7; 18.Bd3 Bxe3; 19.fxe3 Rxe3+; 20.Kf2 Qg5; 21.Rhf1 h6; 22.Ne4 Qf4+; 23.Kg1 Qh4; 24.g3 Qe7; 25.Kf2 Rxd3; 26.Qxd3 Bh3; 27.Rfe1 Nd7.



Black has compensation for the exchange. The knight at d7 has a good future at e5 or c5, and the White pawns are weak. Singh – Sergejev, Matinhos 1994 eventually ended in a draw.

F3) 8.Qe3 0-0; 9.Nge2 Re8; 10.Qf3 Nxc3; 11.bxc3 Qxd4!

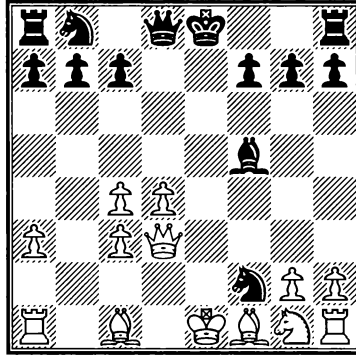


## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

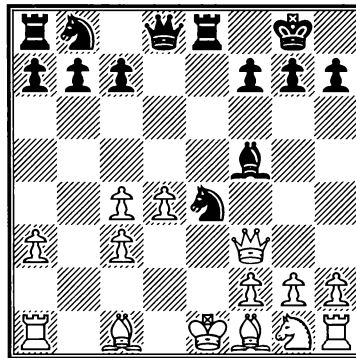
This exploits the multiple pins along the a5-e1 diagonal and e-file, and gives Black huge advantage. 12.Bd2 Qe5; 13.Qe3 Bc5; 14.Qxe5 Rxe5; 15.Bf4 Re7. Black has a clearly superior position, Thirion - Berend, Eupen 1995.

That leaves us with **8.a3!** which forces matters.

8...Bxc3+; 9.bxc3 0-0 (9...Nxf2 is an obvious candidate, though no one has tried it yet.)



10.Qe3+ Ne4; 11.Bd3 0-0! followed by...Re8 looks very strong for Black.) When Black castles, then the rook can get to the e-file very quickly. 10.Qf3 Re8.

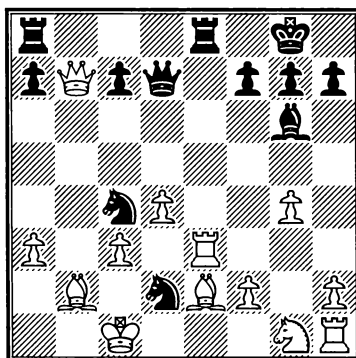


A very interesting position with Black having a lot of initiative and development for the pawn. White must attend to the lagging development.

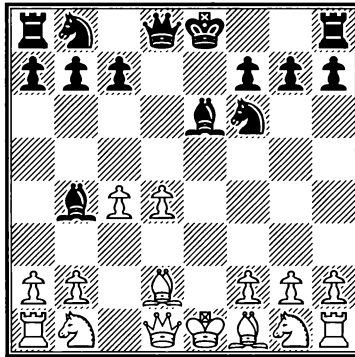
A) 11.Ne2 Qd7; 12.h3 Nc6; 13.g4 Bg6; 14.Bg2 Nd6; 15.c5 Nc4; 16.Qd5 Qxd5; 17.Bxd5 Bd3 (17...N6a5 is interesting.) 18.Ra2 Ne7; 19.Bf3 Ng6; 20.Kd1 Nh4; 21.Bxb7 Rab8 22.Bc6 Bb1; 23.Bxe8 Bxa2; 24.Ba4 and Black's attack has run out of fuel in a game credited as Klinger – Thorhallsson, Gausdal 1986 or Klinger – Schlosser, 1986.;

B) 11.Be3 Qd7; 12.Bd3 Bg4; 13.Qf4 g5; 14.Qxe4 Rxe4; 15.Bxe4 Nc6; 16.Nf3 Re8. Here the greedy 17.Nxg5 get punished by 17...h6; 18.Nxf7 (18.Nh7 Kg7; 19.Bc2 Bf5!; 18.Bh7+ Kh8; 19.h3 Bf5; 20.Bxf5 Qxf5; 21.Nf3 Qd3 and White cannot survive for long.) 18...Rxe4; 19.Nxh6+ Kh7; 20.Nxg4 Rxg4; 21.0-0 White has finally castled, but it comes too late. 21...Ne7; 22.f3 Rg7; 23.Bf4 Nf5; 24.Be5 Rg6; 25.Rae1 Qa4; 26.g4 Qxc4; 27.Kh1 Ne3; 28.Rg1 Qxc3; 29.Rc1 Nxg4. White resigned, Ostojic – Oswald, Travemunde 1991.

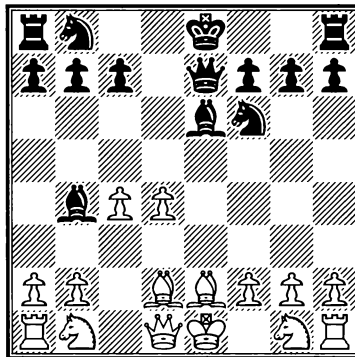
C) 11.Be2 is slow. Black can continue with 11...Qd7; 12.Bb2 (12.Nh3 Nc6; 13.0-0 Nxc3; 14.Qxc3 Rxe2; 15.d5 Ne7; Black has an initiative and the White forces pose no danger, Markun – Giessmann, Finkenstein Open 1993.) 12...Nc6; 13.g4 Bg6; 14.0-0-0 Na5; 15.Rd3 Nxc4; 16.Re3 Ned2 17.Qxb7.



## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT



6...Qe7. Black sets up threats on the e-file and simultaneously defends the bishop at b4.



The modest move of the bishop to e2 is probably best, but White can explore other paths. Obviously it is possible to capture the bishop at b4. White can also interpose the queen at e2. The calm developing move Nc3 is also possible.

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT - OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 7

**1.e4 d5; 2.exd5 Nf6; 3.c4 e6; 4.dxe6 Bxe6; 5.d4 Bb4+; 6.Bd2 Qe7**

Option 1: 7.Bxb4

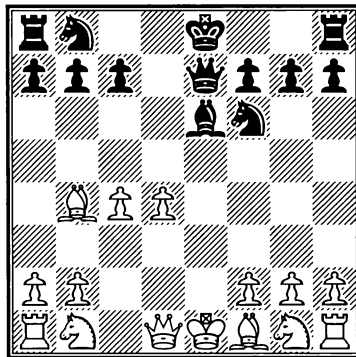
Option 2: 7.Qe2

Option 3: 7.Nc3

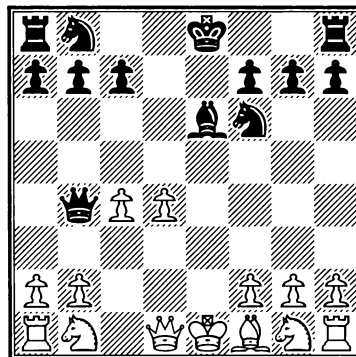
Option 4: 7.Be2!

## ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 7

### Option 1: 7.Bxb4



After we capture the bishop with 7...Qxb4+ White has three different interpolations. The most complicated is 8.Qd2, and we'll take that as the main line for Option 1.



Let's take a look at the other moves first.

A) 8.Nd2 Nc6; 9.Ngf3 0-0-0; 10.d5 Nxd5. Black can also play 10...Rfhe8, but the text is most accurate.

A1) 11.cxd5 Bxd5; 12.Be2 Bxf3; 13.Bxf3 (13.gxf3 Rhe8 and the pins are too powerful.) 13...Rhe8+; 14.Be2 Nd4 and Black wins.

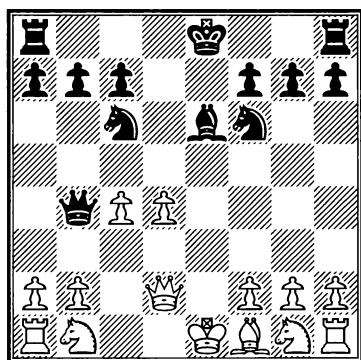
A2) 11.Qc2 is best handled by 11...Qc5; 12.a3 Nf4; 13.Qe4 g5 (13...Rhe8 also looks good.) 14.Qe3 Qf5; 15.0-0-0. White has castled, but has no material advantage and is still way behind in development. Then, 15...Rhe8; 16.Qe4 Qf6 and Black has the better game,

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

Martens – Hauchard, Santiago 1990.

B) 8.Nc3 0–0; 9.Qd2 Bxc4; 10.Bxc4 Qxc4; 11.Nge2 Nc6; 12.0–0 Rad8. White's weak pawn at d4 is a serious disadvantage, Foster–Vann, Paignton Congress 1990.

Offering to exchange queens with **8.Qd2** is natural. Black should play **8...Nc6**.

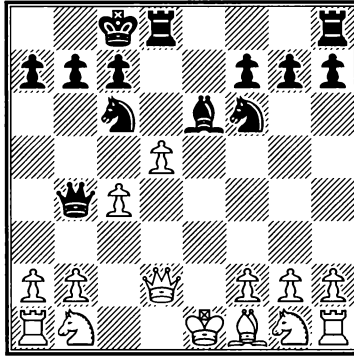


White has tried a number of plans here, but Black is developing rapidly and has compensation for the pawn. The most critical line is the advance of the d-pawn, forking the knight and bishop. That is the variation we will study in detail, but just in case White tries to exchange queens, or offers up the c-pawn, we'll look at those possibilities first.

A) 9.Qxb4 Nxb4; 10.Na3 0–0–0; 11.d5 Bf5; 12.f3 Rhe8+; 13.Kf2 Nd7 (13...c6 is good, I think, because it opens up the d-file.) 14.g4 Bg6; 15.h4 Nc5; 16.Rh2 Bd3; 17.Nh3 Bxf1; 18.Kxf1. Black has some compensation for the pawn, but it is not full compensation and White's chances are to be preferred, Bruno–Asensio, Buenos Aires 1991.

B) 9.Nc3 Bxc4; 10.Bxc4 Qxc4; 11.Qe3+ Kf8; 12.0–0–0 Nb4; 13.Kb1 Nfd5; 14.Qd2 Nxc3+; 15.bxc3 Nd5 even though Black's king sits awkwardly at f8, Black has the advantage thanks to superior pawn structure and the vulnerability of White's king, Doghri – Galego, Algarve 1995.

The double attack with **9.d5** is not a problem because Black can just castle queenside with **9...0–0–0**. Then the pawn at d5 is pinned to the queen.



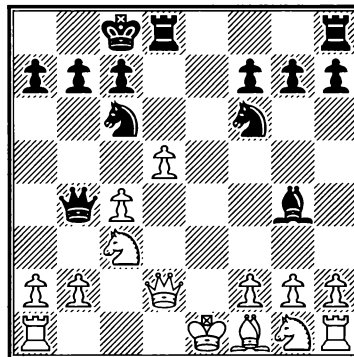
This is a popular line. Black continues to develop rapidly before White can consolidate. The best plan is to bring the knight to c3, as none of the alternatives achieve anything.

A) 10.Na3 Bf5; 11.f3 Rhe8+; 12.Be2 Qc5; 13.Kf1 Nb4; 14.g4 Nfxd5; 15.cxd5 Nxd5; 16.Qc1 Ne3+; 17.Ke1 Bc2; 18.Nxc2 Nxc2+; 19.Kf1 Rd5; 20.Rb1 Ne3+ and the point was split in Metz-Hauke, Kehl 1989.

B) 10.Bd3 Rhe8; 11.Kf1 was played in Bex-Richter, Bad Ragaz 1990. 11...Nxd5!; 12.cxd5 Qxd2; 13.Nxd2 Rxd5; and Black recovers the piece with a much better position.

C) 10.a3 Qe7; 11.Be2 Nxd5; 12.cxd5 Bxd5; 13.f3 (13.Qf4 Bxg2; 14.Qg4+ Qe6; 15.Qxg2 Nd4; 16.Nc3 Nc2+; 17.Kf1 Nxa1 and Black is better.) 13...Bxf3; 14.Nxf3 Rxd2; 15.Nfxd2 Nd4; 16.Kd1 Qxe2+; 17.Kc1 Qd3; 18.Kd1 Qc2+; 19.Ke1 Re8+; 20.Kf2 Re2+; 21.Kg3 Qg6+ and Black won, Phillips - Lindam, Postal 1995.

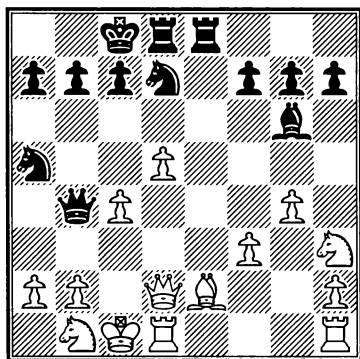
So, 10.Nc3 is logical. Black should play 10...Bg4 and now:



## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

A) 11.Bd3 Rhe8+; 12.Nge2 Ne5; 13.0-0 Nxd3; 14.Qxd3 Bxe2; 15.Nxe2 Qxb2; 16.Nd4 Re4; 17.Nb5 Kb8; 18.Nc3 Rh4. This brings the rook too far offside. There are no real threats against White's king. (18...Re5; 19.Rab1 Qa3; 20.Rb3 Qe7 and now the weakness of White's back rank makes it impossible to bring enough firepower to the b-file.) 19.g3 Rh6; 20.Rab1 Qa3; 21.Qd4 Rh5; 22.Nb5 Qa5; 23.Rfe1 Qb6; 24.Qxb6 axb6; 25.Re7 and White had a strong endgame advantage in Osadchenko – Denisov, Moscow (Petrosian) 1997. This shows the foolishness of sending the rook to the h-file and conceding the important central highway.

B) 11.f3 Rhe8+; 12.Be2 Bf5; 13.0-0-0. The White king escapes to the queenside, but the Black attack continues. 13...Na5; 14.g4 (14.Qf4 Bg6; 15.Rd4 Nh5; 16.Qd2 c5; 17.dxc6 bxc6; 18.Nh3 c5; 19.Rd6 Nxc4; 20.Bxc4 Qxc4; 21.Rd1 Rxd6; 22.Qxd6 Nf6 was eventually drawn in Ahlberg – Richter, Postal 1992.) 14...Bg6; 15.Nh3 Nd7; 16.Nb1? It is not easy to see the refutation of this move, but British Grandmaster Julian Hodgson didn't fail to spot it!

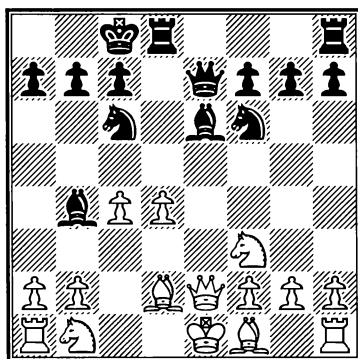


16...Qb3!!; 17.Bd3 (17.axb3 Nxb3#) 17...Qxa2; 18.Qb4 Re2!! 19.Bxe2 Nb3+; 20.Qxb3 Qxb3; 21.Rd2 Qe3; 22.Rhd1 Nc5 and White gave up, Kuijf – Hodgson, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 7

#### Option 2: 7.Qe2

Now Black hastens to castle queenside. 7...Nc6; 8.Nf3 0-0-0.



White can win a piece now but Black's lead in development is too great. 9.d5 (9.Qe3 Bxd2+; 10.Nbxd2 Nb4; gives Black enough threats to compensate for the pawn.) 9...Rhe8; 10.dxc6 Qc5; 11.cxb7+ Kxb7; 12.Ne5 Bg4; 13.Nxg4 Nxg4; 14.Qxe8 Qxf2+; 15.Kd1 Ne3+; 16.Kc1 Qe1+; 17.Bxe1 Rd1#, Cossins – Evans, British Championship 1973.

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 7

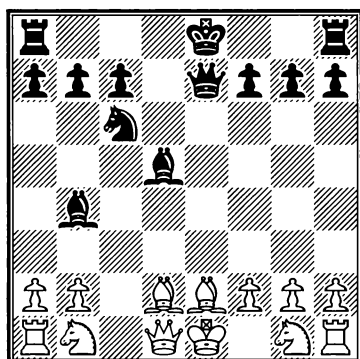
#### Option 3: 7.Nc3

7...Bxc4+; 8.Be2 0-0; 9.Be3 Bxe2; 10.Ngxe2 Ng4; 11.Qd3 Re8; 12.0-0 Nxe3; 13.fxe3 Qxe3+; 14.Qxe3 Rxe3 and Black was clearly better in Tatler–Vann, Leamington Quickplay 1990.

### ICELANDIC GAMBIT, MOVE 7

#### Option 4: 7.Be2.

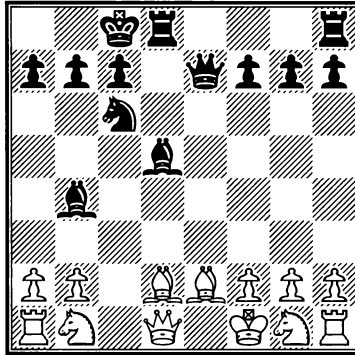
Here Black can afford to take care of matters at d5 by sacrificial means. 7...Nc6; 8.d5 Nxd5; 9.cxd5 Bxd5.



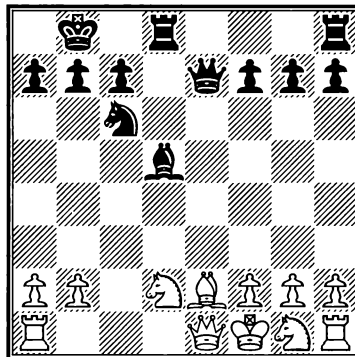
## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT

Black has sacrificed a piece for a pawn, but is almost finished with development. This variation has been tested a number of times in tournament play.

**10.Kf1.** Or 10.Nf3 Bxf3; 11.gxf3 0-0-0; 12.Nc3 Nd4; 13.Kf1 Qd7; 14.Ke1 Qe6! and White is in deep trouble. **10...0-0-0.**

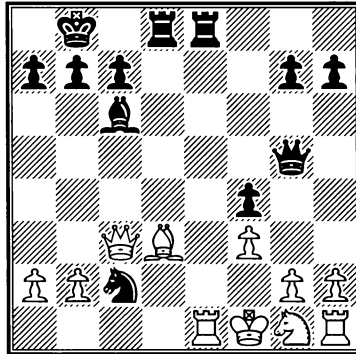


**11.Qe1.** This looks good, but the position remains too congested. White should consider the alternative. 11.Nc3!? Rhe8 (11...Bxc3; 12.bxc3 is perhaps best. 12...Be4; 13.Qe1 Rhe8; 14.Be3 Ne5; 15.Rd1 Nd3; 16.Bxd3 Bxd3+; 17.Ne2 f5; and the threat of...f4 is very strong. I expect that sooner or later White will have to sacrifice the exchange at d3, and then material will be equal. If White just defends, Black should advance the kingside pawns in an attack.) 12.Nf3 Bxc3; 13.bxc3 (13.Bxc3 Bxf3) 13...Qc5; 14.Kg1 h6; 15.Bd3 Bxf3; 16.Qxf3 Re6 threatens the nasty...Ne5, but White has 17.Rb1! pinning the knight to the pawn at b7. **11...Bxd2; 12.Nxd2 Kb8.**



**13.Bf3.**

White must try to untangle, somehow. Another plan is 13.Nc4 Nd4; 14.Ne3 Rhe8; 15.Qc3 Bc6; 16.Re1 f5; 17.Bd3 f4; 18.Nc2 Qg5; 19.f3 Nxc2.

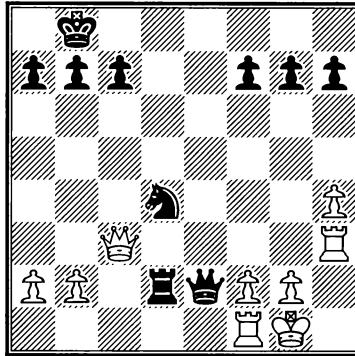


A) 20.Qxc2 Rxe1+; 21.Kxe1 Qa5+ leads to an advantage for Black, for example 22.Qd2 (22.Kf2 Qb6+; 23.Kf1 Rxd3!) 22...Qxd2+; 23.Kxd2 Bb5; 24.Nh3 Rxd3+; 25.Kc2 Rd4; 26.Rd1 Rc4+; 27.Kb3 c5 and Black is clearly better.

B) 20.Rxe8 leads to simplification. 20...Bxe8; 21.Bxc2 Bb5+; 22.Ne2 Bxe2+; 23.Kf2 Bb5; 24.Rd1 Qh4+; 25.Kg1 Rxd1+; 26.Bxd1 Qf6! Black has correctly determined that the endgame is advantageous for Black despite the weak pawns on the kingside. The White king has great difficulty getting into the game. 27.Qxf6 gxf6; 28.Bc2 h6; 29.g3 fxf3; 30.hxf3 c5; 31.Kg2 (31.Kf2 Kc7; 32.Ke3 Kd6; 33.Kf4 Bd7; and White faces a difficult defense.) 31...Bc6; 32.g4 Kc7; 33.Kg3 b5; 34.Kf4 Kd6; 35.Bd1 Ke6; 36.Bc2 a5; 37.Bf5+ Kd6. White resigned, as the endgame is a fairly straightforward win, Iotov – Schubert, Postal 1991.

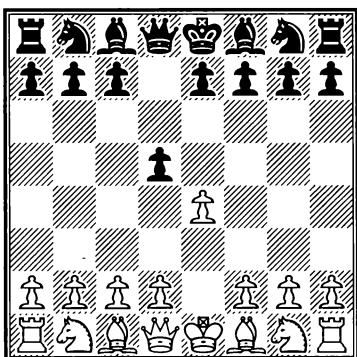
**13...Qd6!** This holds the position together. Inevitably, pieces will start to leave the board. **14.Bxd5 Qxd5; 15.Ngf3 Rhe8; 16.Qc1 Qd3+; 17.Kg1 Re2; 18.Qc4 Rxd2; 19.Nxd2 Qxd2; 20.Qc3 Qe2.** Here ECO suggests exchanging queens instead, citing Ioseliani-Gurieli. The notes, derived from Gurieli, completely misassess the final position! **21.h4 Rd2; 22.Rf1 Nd4; 23.Rh3.**

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ICELANDIC GAMBIT



Amazingly, Black's reply was overlooked in Ioseliani-Gurieli, Tbilisi 1987! That game saw 23...c5?! and White eventually won. One of our correspondence players improves with **23...Rd1**. White resigned in Banasziewicz – Kaczynski, Postal 1992 because of 24.Rxd1 Qxd1+; 25.Kh2 Ne2; 26.Rd3 Nxc3.

# SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE DECLINED



## OPENING MOVES

1.e4 d5

## OVERVIEW

Declining the **Scandinavian** is almost absurd, and is seen only for shock value. Maybe White just loves to play gambits and will offer the e-pawn as a sacrifice. We'll look at that in the next chapter. Most of the other options involve quiet moves that in no way challenge your aspirations. There is no real need to prepare anything special. Just develop your pieces with an eye on the center.

I present some food for thought here, a few examples that will help you meet any sidelines that don't enter the Scandinavian proper.

One good rule of thumb is try not to accept any White gambits. After all, *you* are the gambiteer, and you want the privilege of offering material for the initiative. Don't let White psych you out of your plan. At the same time, don't go overboard and throw away material for no reason.

If your opponent won't accept the pawn at d5, be happy that you won't face a difficult time in the opening and get on to preparing a middlegame win.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE *Declined*

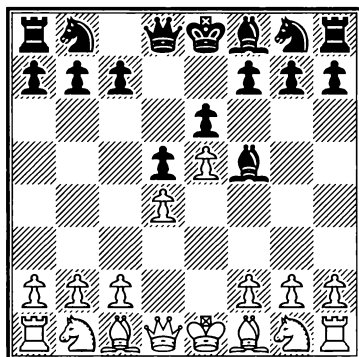
**2.e5 Bf5; 3.d4 e6**

<i>Option for move 4</i>	<b>90</b>
Option 1: 4.Nf3	90
Option 2: 4.Bd3	90
Option 3: 4.c3	91
Option 4: 4.Nc3	91
Option 5: 4.h4	92
<b>2.Nc3</b>	
2.Nc3 Line	93

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • DECLINED

**2.e5** is a waste of time that has little merit, other than keeping the enemy knight off of f6. **2.Nc3**. The advance of the e-pawn is also to be considered.

**2...Bf5**. Black can also choose **2...c5**, which may eventually transpose to an Alapin Sicilian. **3.d4 e6**.



Bent Larsen claims that Black has equalized already, and he is probably right. Here White can develop in many different ways, and can even launch a flank attack. Fortunately, none of the plans gives us any cause for worry.

### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE DECLINED OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 4

1.e4 d5; 2.e5 Bf5; 3.d4 e6

Option 1: 4.Nf3

Option 2: 4.Bd3

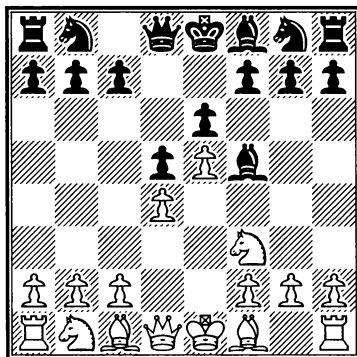
Option 3: 4.c3

Option 4: 4.Nc3

Option 5: 4.h4

SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE, MOVE 4

Option 1: 4.Nf3



This encourages us to strike at the center with 4...c5 and now:

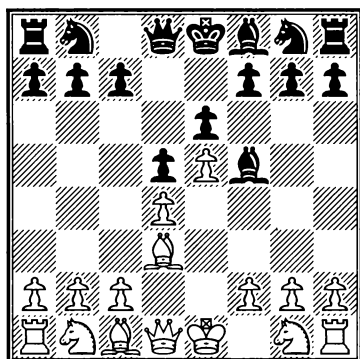
A) 5.c3 Nc6; 6.Bb5 Qa5; 7.Qa4 Qxa4; 8.Bxa4 Bd3. Black has good queenside play, and White struggles to castle.

B) 5.Bd3 Bxd3; 6.Qxd3 Nc6; 7.c3 Rc8; 8.0-0 Qb6 gives Black a promising position. Kingside development can wait because there is no way for White to attack. Black will eventually play...Nge7-g6, then ...Be7 and ...0-0.

C) 5.Be3 Qb6; 6.b3 Nc6; 7.c3 Rc8; 8.dxc5 Bxc5; 9.Bxc5 Qxc5; 10.Nd4 Bxb1! and in Cruse - Linn, North Bay 1996, White could not recapture the piece because of 11.Rxb1 Qxc3+; 12.Qd2 Qxd2+; 13.Kxd2 Nxd4.

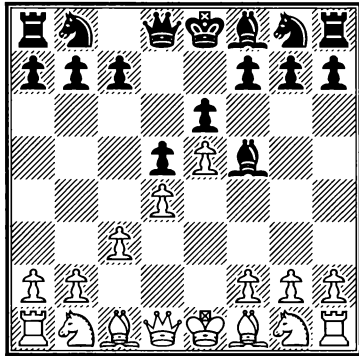
SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE, MOVE 4

Option 2: 4.Bd3



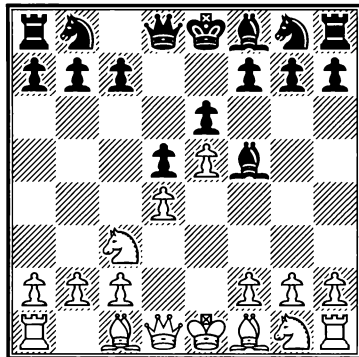
Black first exchanges bishops with 4...Bxd3; 5.Bxd3. Again we rely on 5...c5 for example 6.c3 cxd4; 7.cxd4 Nc6 with a comfortable position for Black in Snijders – Hibma, Amsterdam 1996.

**SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE DECLINED, MOVE 4**  
**Option 3: 4.c3**



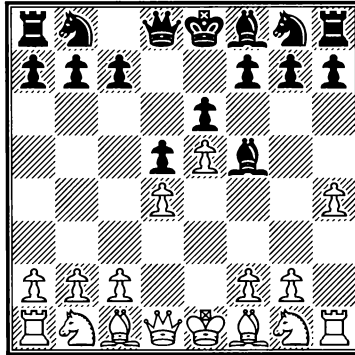
The pattern repeats here: 4...c5; 5.Nf3 Nc6. Black is a tempo ahead in an Advance Caro-Kann, Short Variation, which begins 1.e4 c6; 2.d4 d5; 3.e5 Bf5; 4.Nf3 e6; 5.Be2 Bxb1; 6.Rxb1 cxd4; 7.cxd4 Qa5+; 8.Bd2 Qxa2. This is an example of how the pawn at c5 can be put to good use!

**SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE, MOVE 4**  
**Option 4: 4.Nc3**

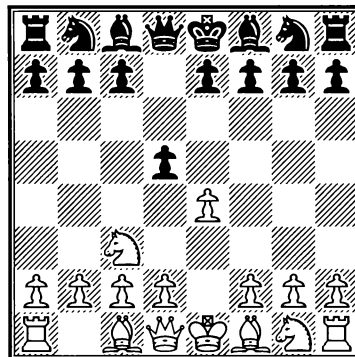


White would be foolish to play this way. After 4...Bb4 have a Winawer Variation of the French Defense with the important difference that the light-squared bishop is on the active f5 square, rather than buried at c8.

**SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE DECLINED, MOVE 4**  
**Option 5: 4.h4**



This has a hidden agenda. The idea is to trap the bishop with a combination of g4, f3, and h5. Black can ignore this threat for a while, but can stop it cold with 4...h5 immediately, for example 5.Bd3 Bxd3; 6.Qxd3 c5 and again Black is a full tempo up on the Advance Caro-Kann, Barrios – Dreyer, Yerevan Olympiad 1996. Compare 1.e4 c6; 2.d4 d5; 3.e5 Bf5; 4.h4 h5; 5.Bd3 Bxd3; 6.Qxd3, but here our pawn is more useful at c5.

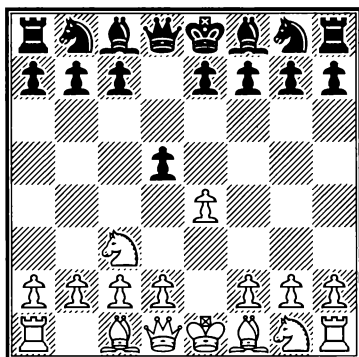


## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • DECLINED

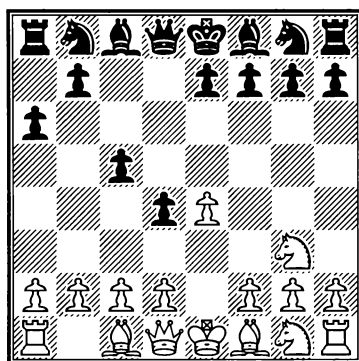
### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE DECLINED

#### 2.Nc3 LINE

So, we need only consider the direct challenge for control of the center, a battle which we fully intend to win. **1.e4 d5; 2.Nc3.**



With this second move, White exposes the knight to attack from our infantry. *ECO* has such a low opinion of the move that it doesn't even mention it! Countering with **2...d4**, we take up White's challenge and chase the invading knight back to an awkward square. **3.Nce2 c5**. There are other good moves, but this is a nice ambitious queenside plan. The idea is that White wants to play **Ng3, Bc4, Nf3**, and attack on the kingside. We can counter this idea with...**a6**, so that in the case of **Bc4**, then...**b5** will win space and time. **4.Ng3 a6**.



**5.Be2.** Van Geet, the leading exponent of the White side of this opening and **1.Nc3** in general, points out that White could consider playing **a4** before developing the bishop at **c4**. **5.Bc4?** is a serious

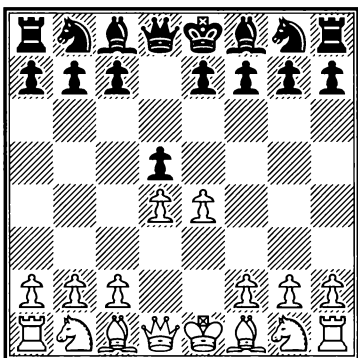
error. 5...b5; 6.Bd5 Ra7; 7.a4 e6; 8.Ba2 c4 and the bishop is trapped behind a wall of pawns. White can try to set up the move with the advance of the a-pawn: 5.a4 Nc6; 6.Bc4 but here 6...Ne5 looks good.

**5...Nc6; 6.d3 e5; 7.Bg4 g6; 8.Nh3 Bg7; 9.0-0 Nge7; 10.f4 0-0; 11.Bxc8 Rxc8; 12.Ng5 exf4; 13.Bxf4 Qd7; 14.Nf3 f6.** Black was equal in Ekebjaerg-Khyrenov, Postal 1982.

This is the only game cited in Van Geet's book, so your opponents are not likely to be well prepared for our defense.

# SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE

## ANTI-BLACKMAR DIEMER GAMBIT



### OPENING MOVES

1.e4 d5  
2.d4

## OVERVIEW

Ah, the **Blackmar-Diemer Gambit**! When someone plays this against you, you know you are up against someone who is a true gambiteer. The enemy probably loves gambits even more than you do, because the BDG is an unsound gambit. Regrettably so, since it has led to many brilliant wins, but the fact of the matter is that no international stars ever use it.

At the professional level, it is considered a joke by most players who just munch the pawn and then settle in for defense which will be rewarded by a winning endgame. You have to remember, however, that professionals know how to defend, and amateurs don't have such advanced skills. So the gambit can be dangerous in amateur games. For that reason, we are going to choose an obscure method of declining the gambit. Perhaps "decline" is not the right word, because we are going to offer a counter-gambit of our own.

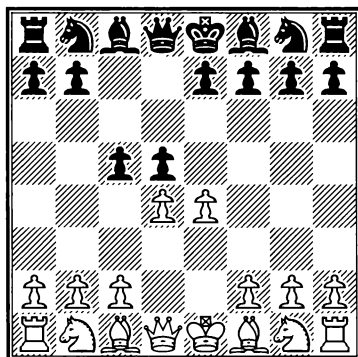
Since White is an all-out attacking player (a prerequisite for playing the Blackmar-Diemer), we'll see if we can take the initiative and make our opponent defend. Most BDG players won't welcome that!

### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE *Anti-BDG*

2...c5; exd5

<i>Options for move 3</i>	96
Option 1: 3.Nc3.	97
Option 2: 3.Nd2	98
Option 3: 3.dxc5	99
Option 4: 3.e5	101

2...c5!?



This is a reversed form of the Albin Counterattack (1.d4 d5; 2.c4 e5) with White having a valuable extra tempo. In theory, this is a big benefit for your opponent, but it only works to their advantage if they normally play the Albin and are familiar with its intricate complications. The Black side of this position is fairly easy to play, with your goals being standard development. In addition, you have to remember that in the normal Albin, White's goals are ambitious.

Here, as Black, we are content to get a playable game with some exciting tactical possibilities. So the mere fact that we are playing a reversed Albin with a missing tempo should not bother us. Enough abstraction, let's look at the lines!

**3.exd5.**

There are three significant alternatives, but the text is the most highly regarded move. White can develop the knight from b1, in support of the pawn at e4, or capture at c5.

### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE ANTI-BDG - OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 3

1.e4 d5; 2.d4 c5; 3.exd5

Option 1: 3.Nc3

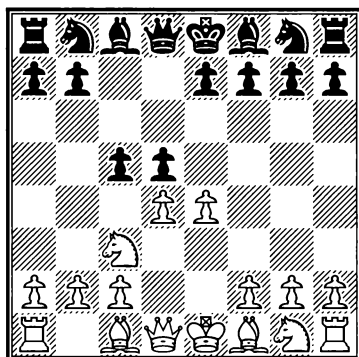
Option 2: 3.Nd2

Option 3: 3.dxc5

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ANTI BDG

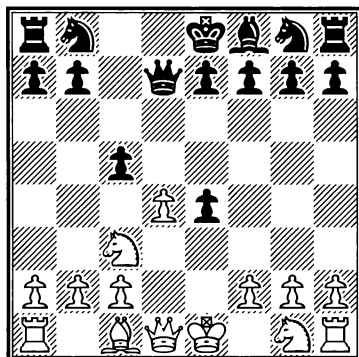
### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE - ANTI BDG

#### Option 1: 3.Nc3



A sensible continuation. Black can transpose to the dubious Marshall Gambit with 3...e6, but 3...dxe4 is more solid. Now 4.Nxe4 Qxd4 is hard to justify for White. 5.Qxd4 cxd4; 6.Nf3 Nc6; 7.Bb5 Bf5; 8.Nc5 e5; 9.Nxb7 Bd7 threatens to trap the White knight. 10.0-0 Rb8; 11.Bxc6 Bxc6; 12.Na5 Bxf3; 13.gxf3 f6; leaves White with vulnerable pawns on the queenside and a fractured kingside.

4.Bb5+ leads to an exchange of light-squared bishops with 4...Bd7 5.Bxd7+ Qxd7.



6.d5 is now common, in the spirit of a reversed Albin Countergambit, though the departure of the light-squared bishops may not work in White's favor here. After the advance of White's d-pawn, 6...Nf6 makes sense. 7.Bg5 Na6 gives White a choice between two reasonable plans.

A) 8.Qd2 Qg4; 9.g3 Rd8; 10.h3 Qh5; 11.Rd1 (11.Nge2 Nb4; 12.Bxf6 gxf6; 13.Nf4 Qf3; 14.0-0 Bh6; wins for Black.) 11...Nb4; 12.Bxf6 gxf6; 13.Nb5 (13.Qe2 Qxe2+; 14.Kxe2 Nxc2; 15.Nxe4 Nd4+; 16.Kf1 Rxd5) 13...Bh6; 14.Qc3 is still unclear.

B) 8.Bxf6 gxf6; 9.Nxe4 f5; 10.Ng3 (10.Nc3 Rg8; and White is uncomfortable on the g-file.) 10...Bg7; 11.c3 0-0-0; 12.Qc2 Qxd5; 13.Qxf5+ e6; 14.Qxd5 Rxd5; 15.Rd1. Otherwise Black doubles rooks on the d-file. 15...Rhd8; 16.Rxd5 Rxd5; 17.Nf3 b5; 18.Ke2 c4 and Black controls more space, with d3 a definite target for a knight invasion. So White must try something else.

**4.d5** is a good move, creating a reversed Albin Countergambit (1.e4 d5; 2.c4 e5; 2.dxe5 d4.), but the extra tempo merely elevates this gambit to a level of respectability it does not enjoy when used as Black. **4...Nf6** and now:

A) 5.Bg5 Qb6! is better for Black, and it is not easy to regain the pawn.

B) 5.Be3 Qb6; 6.Bb5+ Bd7; 7.Qe2 Bxb5; 8.Qxb5+ Qxb5; 9.Nxb5 Nxd5; 10.0-0-0! and White maintains equality. The knight cannot capture at e3 because of Nc7; mate! 10...a6; 11.Rxd5 axb5; 12.Rxc5 b4; 13.Rb5 Nc6; 14.Rxb7 (14.Kb1 0-0-0; looks about even.) 14...Rxa2; 15.Kb1 Ra4; 16.Ne2 f5; 17.Rb6 Ne5; 18.Rb8+ Kf7; 19.Rb5 and White is better.

C) 5.f3 5...exf3; 6.Nxf3 a6; 7.Bg5 b5; 8.Be2 Bb7; 9.Bxf6 exf6; 10.Qd2 and here there are two important branches:

C1) 10...b4!; 11.Qe3+ Qe7; 12.Ne4 Bxd5; 13.Nd6+ Kd8; 14.Qxc5 Qxd6; 15.Qa5+ Kc8 and White must struggle to justify the investment of material. 16.Rd1 (16.0-0-0 allows 16...Qf4+.) 16...Nc6; 17.Qxd5 Qxd5; 18.Rxd5 Kc7; and Black is no worse.

C2) 10...Be7; 11.Rd1 f5; 12.d6 Bf6; 13.Qe3+ Kf8; 14.Qxc5 Nd7; 15.Qc7 Qxc7; 16.dxc7 Nb6?! (16...Nc5; 17.Nd5 Bxd5; 18.Rxd5 Ne6; 19.Rxf5 Nxc7; 20.c3 Rd8; 21.0-0 Ke7 is even, since Black can cover the e-file with...Ne6.) 17.Rd6 Nc4; 18.Bxc4 bxc4; 19.0-0 Be7; 20.Rd2 Rc8; 21.Rfd1 Ke8; 22.Nd5 Bxd5; 23.Rxd5 Rxc7; 24.Rxf5 Rb7 with a strong game for Black in Jensen-Benjamin, Denmark 1989.

## **SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE-ANTI-BDG, MOVE 3**

### **Option 2: 3.Nd2**

Here 3...e6 has been seen. (3...cxd4 looks much stronger to me.) 4.Ng3 cxd4; 5.Nxd4 Nc6; 6.Nxc6 bxc6; 7.Bd3 Bd6; 8.Qe2 is solid for Black. 8...Qc7; 9.Nf3 dxe4; 10.Qxe4 Nf6; 11.Qa4 Rb8 with a draw in

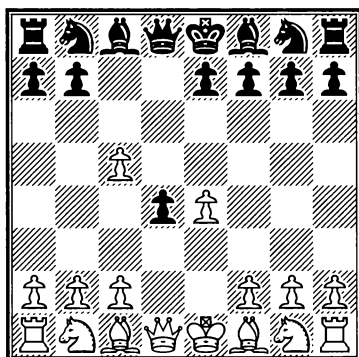
## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ANTI BDG

Atlas – Thesing, Odessa 1990.

### SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE, MOVE 3

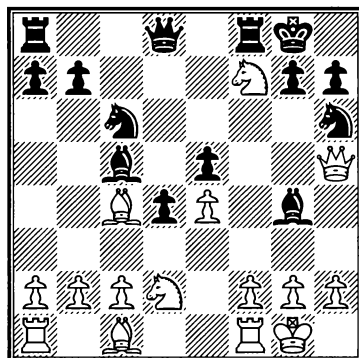
#### Option 3: 3.dxc5

This is an interesting plan and Black will have to take up the gauntlet. 3...d4.



4.Nf3 (4.c3 is an offer that should be declined, because the exchange of queens would take all the fun out of the game and leave Black without enough compensation for the pawn. 4...e5; 5.cxd4 exd4; 6.b4 Nc6; 7.b5 Ne5; 8.f4 Bxc5; 9.fxe5 Qh4+; 10.Kd2 Qxe4; might be worth a try for Black.) 4...Nc6.

A) 5.Bc4 e5; 6.0-0 Bxc5; 7.Ng5 Nh6; 8.Qh5. Black can safely castle: 8...0-0; 9.Nd2 Bg4; 10.Nxf7. Is this sacrifice sound? The literature suggests that it is, but analysis confirms that it is not.

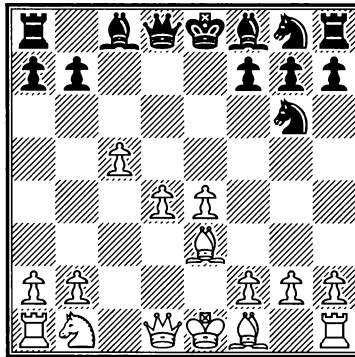


10...Rxf7 (10...Bxh5??; 11.Nxd8+ Kh8; 12.Nxc6, 1-0 Diemer – Schmitt, Baden-Baden 1938) 11.Bxf7+ Kh8 and the White queen is trapped!! This little problem didn't stop Diemer from awarding himself two exclamation marks for the wretched move Nxf7.

B) 5.c3 is sensible:

B1) 5...Bg4; 6.cxd4 Now Black can regain the pawn at the cost of a minor exchange. 6...Bxf3; 7.Qxf3 Qxd4 (7...Nxd4; 8.Qc3 e5; 9.Be3 White has an indisputable advantage, Prodanov – Tsenov, Pernik 1992.) 8.Nc3! Rd8 (8...Qxc5; 9.Be3 Qa5; 10.0-0-0 gives White a very strong attack.) 9.Be3 Qb4; 10.Rb1 and White is clearly better.

B2) 5...e5 is an interesting alternative which may not be at all bad for Black. 6.Nxe5 (6.b4 dxc3; 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8; 8.Nxc3 Nxb4; 9.Nxe5 Be6 gives plenty of play for the pawn.) 6...Nxe5; 7.cxd4 gives White three pawns and a big center for the piece. 7...Ng6; 8.Be3.



8...f5. This opens up the position a bit and gives scope to Black's pieces. (8...Nf6; 9.Nc3 Be7 is worth investigating.) 9.exf5 Bxf5; 10.Nc3 Nf6; 11.Qf3 Qc8 and here there are two plans:

B2a) 12.h3 keeps our bishop from reaching g4, and is a good plan.

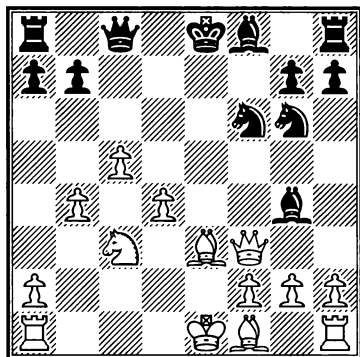
B2a1) 12...Bd7; 13.Bc4 Nh4 (13...Be7 transposes to 12...Be7 lines.) 14.Qg3 Forced, in view of the threat to the g-pawn. 14...Nf5 15.Qe5+ Be7; 16.0-0 and again we have transposed into the 12...Be7 line.

B2a2) 12...Be7; 13.Bc4 Bd7 (13...Nh4; 14.Qg3 Nh5; 15.Qh2 and Black's position is somewhat suspect.) 14.0-0 Nh4 (14...Rf8; 15.Qe2 and now Black can try to open up the enemy fortress by sacrificial means with 15...Bxh3; 16.gxh3 Qxh3 but here 17.Bg5! ties down all of Black's minor pieces!) 15.Qg3 Nf5; 16.Qe5 Rf8 (16...Nh4;

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ANTI BDG

17.Nb5 Kd8 looks awkward, but might be Black's best.) 17.Rad1 and White has a serious advantage. This is one of the most difficult plans to meet.

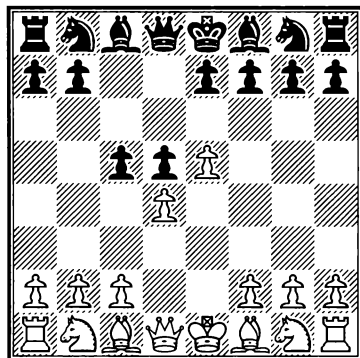
B2b) 12.b4 allows 12...Bg4.



13.Bb5+ leads to a draw in several ways. 13...Kf7; 14.Bc4+ (14.Qg3 Nh5; 15.Bc4+ Ke8; leads to the same result.) 14...Ke8; 15.Bb5+ (15.Qg3 Nh5; 16.Bb5+ Kf7; 17.Bc4+ is the same.) 15...Kf7; 16.Bc4+ Ke8; 17.Bb5+ drawn, Richter – Geisser, Porz 1989.

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE - ANTI-BDG, MOVE 3

### Option 4: 3.e5



3...Bf5 takes over the light squares. Black is a full tempo up on the Advance Caro-Kann, because the pawn has already reached c5. 4.h4 h6; 5.g4 Bh7; 6.e6 Qd6; 7.exf7+ (7.Bb5+ Nc6; 8.exf7+ Kxf7; 9.Bxc6 bxc6; 10.Nf3 cxd4 and Black has a big center under construction.)

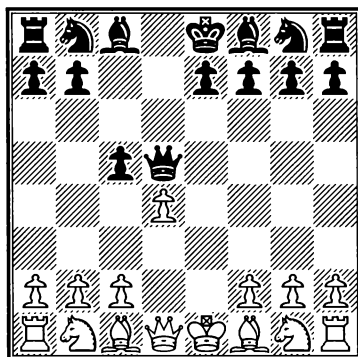
[chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

7...Kxf7; 8.f4? Too ambitious. 8...Qe6+!; 9.Be2 (9.Qe2 Qxe2+; 10.Nxe2 Bxc2) 9...Nf6; 10.Nf3 Nxc4; 11.Ne5+ (11.dxc5 would have been more sensible.) 11...Nxe5; 12.dxe5 Na6!; 13.Nc3 and Black was better. Romero – Izeta, Spain 1995.

So, White should capture at d5 at move 3 and bring our queen to the center. That is, of course, a normal course in the Scandinavian.

*We return to the main line.*

**3... Qxd5.**



Too much symmetry can be dangerous! 3...cxd4; 4.Qxd4 e6; 5.Bb5+ Bd7; 6.dxe6 Bxb5; 7.exf7+ Ke7 and now White wins with an underpromotion: 8.fxg8N+ Ke8; 9.Qe5+ Kf7; 10.Qxb5 Kxg8; 11.Qc4+. Black gave up in Diemer – Reinert, Rastatt 1956.

**4.Nc3.**

Alternatives can be quickly dismissed:

A) 4.dxc5 Qxd1+; 5.Kxd1 Bg4+; 6.Be2 Bxe2+; 7.Nxe2 Na6; 8.Be3 e6 recovers the pawn, and after 9.c6 bxc6; 10.Nd2 Bc5, Black has equalized.

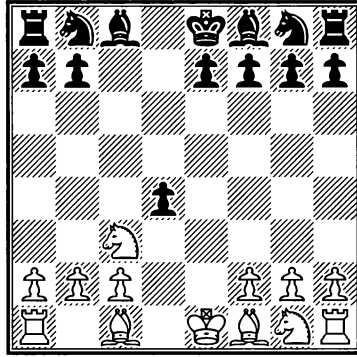
B) 4.c3 e6; 5.Nd2 Nf6; 6.dxc5 Bxc5; 7.Ngf3 Ne4; 8.Nxe4 Qxe4+; 9.Qe2 Qxe2+; 10.Bxe2 Nc6; 11.0-0 0-0 is about even, Arrenault – Sobucki, Paris 1989.

C) 4.Nf3 Bg4; 5.Be2 cxd4 (5...e6! is stronger. The text allows White to win time and chop some wood.) 6.Nc3 Qd8; 7.Qxd4 Qxd4; 8.Nxd4 Bxe2; 9.Ncxe2 e5; 10.Nb5! Bb4+; 11.c3 Ba5; 12.Be3 Nd7; 13.Nd6+ Ke7; 14.0-0-0 and White has the better game. Kagas – Roussis, Ano Liosia 1996.

**4...Qxd4; 5.Qxd4.**

## SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE • ANTI BDG

5.Bd3 is usually met by 5...g6 (5...Nf6 is a good alternative, for example 6.Nf3 Qb4; 7.0-0 Bg4 and Black is better.) 6.Be3 Qb4; 7.Nge2 Nh6. Too slow. Better 7...Nd7. 8.0-0 Nf5; 9.Bf4 Be6? (9...e6! would have kept the game in balance.) 10.Bxb8! was played in Pape – Andersen, Denmark 1986, and Black was in a bad way, because the bishop is taboo: 10...Rxb8; 11.Bb5+ forces Black to give up the queen. 5...cxd4.



The advanced pawn may look weak, but it will be a strong pawn if Black can play ...e5. White has only one piece developed, and it is under attack.

**6.Nb5 Na6; 7.Nxd4 e5!**

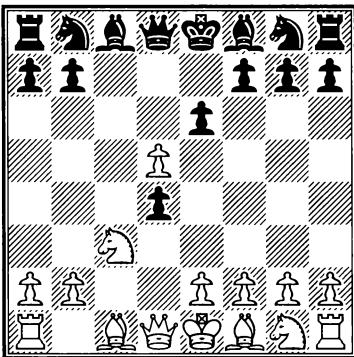
7...b6?? is a blunder: 8.Bb5+ Kd8; 9.Nc6+ Kc7; 10.Bf4+ Kb7; 11.Nd8#, 1-0, Diemer – Poehlmann, Lindau 1947.

**8.Bb5+ Bd7; 9.Bxd7+ Kxd7; 10.Ndf3 Nb4!; 11.Kd1 Rd8; 12.Bd2 Nc6.**

The position is about even, certainly no worse for Black.

# QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

## • SCHARA GAMBIT •



### OPENING MOVES

1.d4	e6
2.c4	d5
3.Nc3	c5
4.cxd5	cxd4

### OVERVIEW

This is the **Schara Gambit**, an interesting opening which leads to wild complications. In most circumstances, our d- and e-pawns will depart quickly, with White giving up the pawn at d5. We remain a pawn down, but develop with tempo to quickly build up a strong kingside attack.

Traditionally, Black has carried out the attack after castling on the queenside. Then a pawnstorm can be used on the kingside. In recent games, however, Black has often chosen to castle on the kingside and use pieces to mount the attack. This strategy has proved successful, because in addition to the kingside, there are open lines on the queenside which can be used to annoy the enemy pieces. In particular, it is hard for the White queen to find refuge. The combination of kingside and queenside threats is worth a pawn, and most authorities evaluate the situation as rather unclear.

### QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED *Schara Gambit*

**5.Qxd4 Nc6; 6.Qd1 exd5;  
7.Qxd5 Bd7; 8.Nf3**

<b>Options at move 8</b>	<b>105</b>
Option 1: 8.Bg5	106
Option 2: 8.e3	108
Option 3: 8.Bd2	109
Option 4: 8.a3	110

<b>Options at move 11</b>	<b>115</b>
Option 1: 11.Bb5	115
Option 2: 11.a3	116
Option 3: 11.Bc4	117
Option 4: 11.Bd3	118

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT

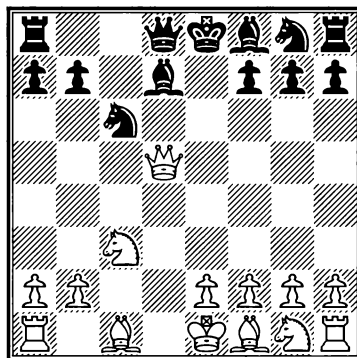
5.Qxd4.

5.Qa4+ Bd7; 6.Qxd4 exd5; 7.Qxd5 Nc6 is the normal move order, used to avoid the endgame gambit option at move 7. If White fails to capture at d5, then Black can continue with normal development, protecting the pawn with ...Nf6.

5...Nc6; 6.Qd1 exd5; 7.Qxd5 Bd7.

White has an extra pawn, but Black is developing quickly, and will soon drive the enemy queen back with...Nf6.

The Endgame Gambit 7...Be6; 8.Qxd8+ Rxd8; 9.e3 Nb4; 10.Bb5+ Ke7; 11.Kf1 is still considered a little better for White. See *Unorthodox Chess Openings* if you are interested in trying that line.



8.Nf3.

Of course there are other moves, and we will examine them before we continue our examination of the main lines. White can bring the bishop to g5, but it may be needed for defense of the queenside, in which case d2 is a better square. If ...Nb4 is a concern, then 8.a3 is available. The quiet 8.e3 is at best a transposition to the main lines.

### SCHARA GAMBIT - OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 8

1.d4 e6; 2.c4 d5; 3.Nc3 c5; 4.cxd5 cxd4; 5.Qxd4 Nc6;  
6.Qd1 exd5; 7.Qxd5 Bd7; 8.Nf3

Option 1: 8.Bg5

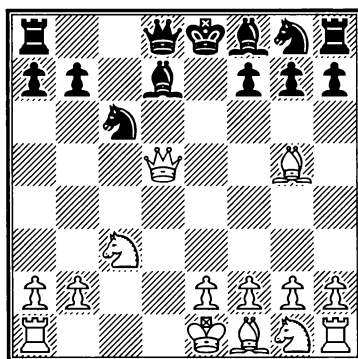
Option 2: 8.e3

Option 3: 8.Bd2

Option 4: 8.a3

SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 8

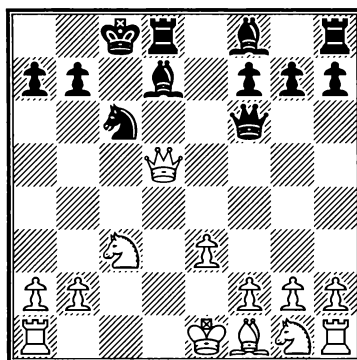
Option 1: 8.Bg5



For some reason, this move is popular with computers.

8...Nf6 is the correct reply. White has a choice of three plans: capturing at f6, retreating the queen to d2, or sending the queen off to other duties at b5. 9.Qd2 is the main line. Let's pause to look at the other two possibilities.

A) 9.Bxf6 Qxf6; 10.e3 (10.Qe4+ Be6; 11.e3 Bb4; 12.Rc1 0-0; 13.Bd3 g6; 14.a3 Ba5; 15.Nge2 Rad8; 16.Bb1 Rfe8; 17.0-0 Bc7; 18.Rfd1 Ne5; 19.Nd5 Bxd5; 20.Rxd5 Rxd5; 21.Qxd5 Ng4; 22.f3 Bxh2+; 23.Kh1 Qh4; 24.fxg4 Bf4+ brought an end to White's game in Zbinden - Jenni, Switzerland 1982.) 10...0-0-0.



You can already feel the threats along the d-file, and the remaining Black forces are ready to enter the game quickly.

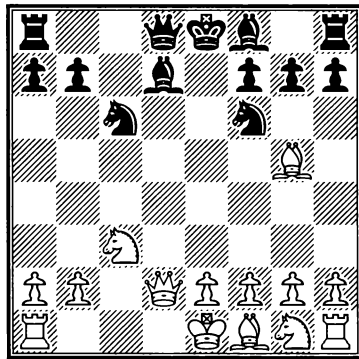
## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT

A1) 11.Nf3 Bb4; 12.Qb3 Qg6!; 13.Ne5 Nxe5; 14.Qxb4 Bc6; 15.Nb5 a6; 16.Na7+ (16.Nd4 Kb8! and White is already in trouble, Arakhamia-Voiska, The-Hague 1989.) 16...Kb8; 17.Nxc6+ Nxc6; 18.Qc3 Rhe8 and the inability of White to get his kingside developed is critical. 19.g3 Ne5; with a clear advantage for Black.

A2) 11.Qb3 Be6; 12.Qa4 Bb4; 13.Rc1 Rd2!!; 14.Kxd2 Qxf2+; 15.Nge2 (15.Be2 Bf5 amounts to the same thing.) 15...Bf5; 16.Qxb4 Rd8+; 17.Qd4 Nxd4; 18.Nb5+ (18.exd4 Rxd4#) 18...Nc6+; 19.Nbd4 Kb8; 20.Kd1 Qxe3 and White resigned in Geister – Zaitsev, Moscow 1960.

B) 9.Qb5 looks strong at first, but is not mentioned in the books. 9...Nb4; 10.Qe5+ Qe7!; 11.Qxe7+ Bxe7 leaves Black a pawn down, but with threats. After 12.Rc1 Bf5 White can try 13.e4, but then on 13...Nxe4!; 14.Bxe7+ Kxe7; 15.Nxe4 Bxe4; 16.Rc7, Black boldly plays 16...Kd6! and the endgame is more troublesome for White.

After the retreat to d2 we have the following picture.



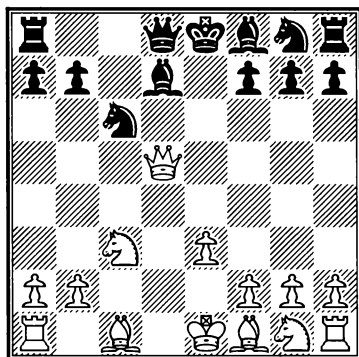
Black must do something about the annoying pin at f6. It is possible to kick the bishop with ...h6. Opinions vary as to the merit of that move. The normal line is 9...Qa5; 10.Bxf6. 10.Qe3+ Be7; 11.Bxf6 gxf6; 12.Nf3 Nb4; 13.Rc1 Nd5; 14.Qd2 Rc8; 15.Rd1 Nb6 and Black is slightly better, Lilienthal – Aramanovich, Moscow 1959.

10...gxf6; 11.Nf3. The quiet 11.e3 0-0-0; 12.Qc1 can lead to similar play, or Black can try the more aggressive 12...Bf5; 13.Nf3 Nb4; 14.Nd4 Rxd4; 15.exd4 Nc2+; 16.Kd1 Nxa1; 17.Qxa1 Bh6; 18.b3 Rd8; 19.d5 Rxd5+; 20.Ke2 Rd2+; 21.Kf3 Qe5; 22.g3 Rc2 and Black won, Rubtsova – Volpert, Soviet Women's Championship 1955. 11...0-0-0; 12.Qc1 Bc5; 13.e3 Kb8. Black can be satisfied with the position. Here is a representative continuation. 14.a3 Bb6; 15.Bb5 Bc7; 16.b4

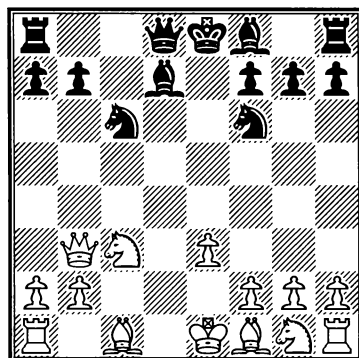
Qb6; 17.Be2 Ne7; 18.Qb2 Rhg8; 19.Ne4 Bc6; 20.Qxf6 Nd5; 21.Qd4 Nf4; 22.Qxb6 Nxg2+; 23.Kf1 axb6; 24.Ng3 Nh4; 25.e4 Ng6; 26.b5 Bd7; 27.Nf5 Rge8; 28.Ng5 Nf4; 29.Bc4 f6; 30.Ng7 Re7; 31.Nxh7 Bh3+. White resigned in Forintos – Hector, Budapest 1986.

**SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 8**

**Option 2: 8.e3**



This has won consistently for White but Black has some fresh ideas. This move is needed now or at the next turn because Black intends to play...Nf6,...Bc5 and then the pawn at f2 can become vulnerable. 8...Nf6; 9.Qb3!?



If Hector was trying to catch Karpov by surprise, he must have forgotten that Karpov has worked for years with Igor Zaitsev, who plays the gambit as Black.

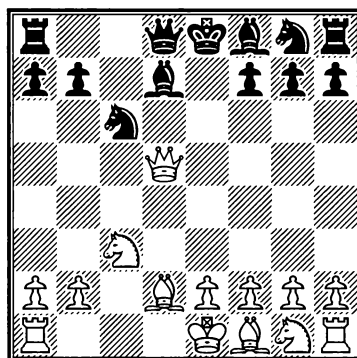
9...Bc5!; 10.Nf3 0-0!? In evaluating this game it is important to

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT

keep in mind that Black chooses to castle kingside. An obvious alternative is to go the other way. 11.a3 (11.Be2 Be6; 12.Qd1 Qe7; 13.0-0 Rfd8; 14.Bd2 a6; 15.a3 b5; 16.b4 Bb6; 17.Qc2 Rac8; 18.Rfd1 Bg4 is even, according to Smith & Hall.) 11...Be6; 12.Qc2 Rc8; 13.Be2 Na5; 14.0-0 Nb3; 15.Rb1 Qb6; 16.Nd2 Rfd8; 17.Nc4 Bxc4; 18.Bxc4 Nxc1; 19.Na4 Qd6; 20.Rbxc1 Ng4; 21.Bxf7+ Kh8 with a clear advantage for Black, Litvinchuk–Randolph, US Open 1984.

### SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 8

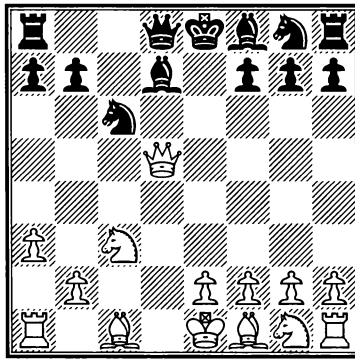
#### Option 3: 8.Bd2



Black should develop normally with 8...Nf6; 9.Qb3 Bb4 (9...Bc5; 10.e3 0-0; 11.Nf3 Qe7; leads to typical gambit play. The pawn at b7 is heavily poisoned. 12.Qxb7?? Rab8; 13.Qa6 Nb4 and Black wins material.) 10.Nf3 0-0; 11.e3 Be6; 12.Qc2 Rc8; 13.Be2 Re8; 14.0-0 Bg4; 15.Rfd1 Qe7; 16.Be1 Ne5; 17.Nxe5 Qxe5; 18.h3 Bf5; 19.Qa4 Bd6; 20.Bf3 Bd7; 21.Qd4 Qh2+; 22.Kf1 Be5. Black had sufficient compensation for the pawn in Havasi–Merenyi, Budapest 1932.

SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 8

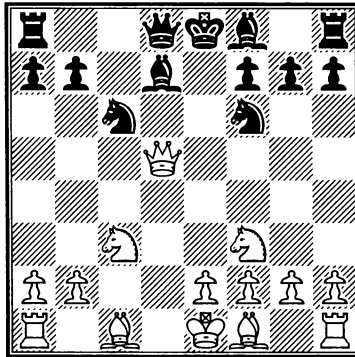
Option 4: 8.a3



This has no independent significance, as after 8...Nf6; 9.Qd1 Bc5; 10.e3 Qe7 transposes below to the main line with 11.a3.

*Returning to the Main Line*

So we return to the position after 8.Nf3, to which we reply with the obvious developing move 8...Nf6.



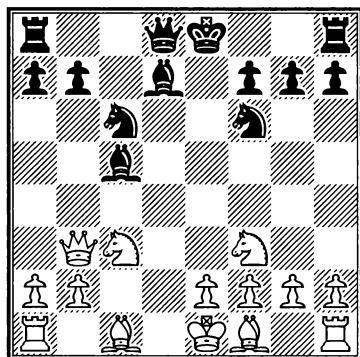
9.Qd1

This has traditionally been considered the main line, but 9.Qb3 is growing in popularity. Let's deal with that first before entering the big muddy river of the main line.

1.d4 e6; 2.c4 d5; 3.Nc3 c5; 4.cxd5 cxd4; 5.Qxd4 Nc6; 6.Qd1 exd5; 7.Qxd5 Bd7; 9.Qb3.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT

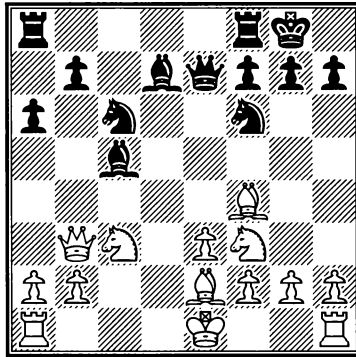
The difference between the 9.Qb3 lines and the lines with Qd1 is that Black does not have pressure on the d-file after queenside castling, and in some cases may be able to pick off the pawn at b7. 9...Bc5.



A) 10.e4 Ng4; 11.Nd1 Qe7. Black is slightly better - Smith & Hall

B) 10.Bg5! 0-0; 11.e3! (11.Ne4 Nxe4; 12.Bxd8 Bxf2+; 13.Kd1 Rfxd8 entered my thoughts when I was playing the Black side of this position in 1980, but I knew that most players would not fall for such a cheap trick.) 11...Be6 (11...h6; 12.Bxf6 Qxf6; 13.Ne4 Qe7; 14.Nxc5 Qxc5; 15.Be2 and White has the better game. Stam – Welling, Utrecht 1985.) 12.Qa4 h6; 13.Bxf6 (13.Rd1 Qe7; 14.Bxf6 Qxf6; 15.Be2. “Black’s active development and Bishop pair give good play in an unclear position” write Smith & Hall.) 13...Qxf6; 14.0-0-0 (14.Ne4? Qxb2; 15.Rd1 Bb4+; 16.Ned2 Bxa2) 14...Rac8 and Black has good counterplay.

C) 10.Bf4 Qe7 is an interesting line. It is probably risky for White to take the pawn at b7. As far as I know, no one has yet dared to do so. After 11.Qxb7 0-0; 12.Rd1 Nb4; 13.Rd2 White should be able to defend against all threats, but Black still has significant compensation for the two pawns. For example, 13...a5; 14.Ne5 Ra7. After 15.Qf3, Black can play 15...Bb7 with tremendous pressure in the center and on both flanks. Against 11.e3 0-0; 12.Be2. Black can try 12...a6!?

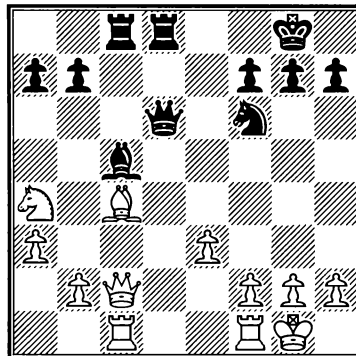


If White captures at b7, Black plays ...Nb4 with unpleasant threats at c2. For example: 13.Qxb7 Nb4; 14.Rd1 Ra7!

D) 10.g3 Be6; 11.Qxb7 Nb4; 12.Qb5+ Nd7; 13.Qa4 0-0; 14.Bg2 Nb6; 15.Qd1 Qxd1+; 16.Kxd1 Rad8+ with a clear advantage for Black, Vinas – Kuijf, Sitges 1992.

E) 10.e3 0-0. In evaluating this game it is important to keep in mind that Black chooses to castle kingside. An obvious alternative is to go the other way. (10...Qe7 intending queenside castling, is suggested by Karpov.) In any case, here are some examples:

E1) 11.a3 Be6; 12.Qc2 Rc8; 13.Be2 Na5; 14.0-0 Nb3; 15.Rb1 Qb6; 16.Nd2 Rfd8; 17.Nc4 Bxc4; 18.Bxc4 Nxc1; 19.Na4 Qd6; 20.Rbxc1.

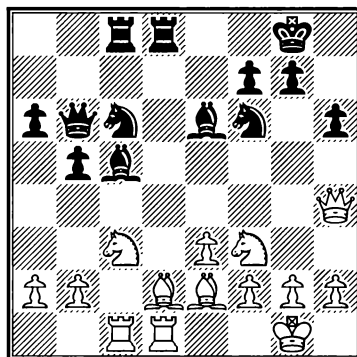


20...Ng4; 21.Bxf7+ Kh8; 22.g3 (22.Rfd1?! Qxh2+; 23.Kf1 Qh1+; 24.Ke2 Qxg2; 25.Qf5 Nh6; 26.Rxd8+ Rxd8; 27.Qxc5 Qg4+; 28.Ke1 Nxf7; 29.b3 Ng5; 30.Qe7 Nf3+; 31.Kf1 Qh3+; 32.Ke2 and White resigned without waiting to get mated. Litvinchuk–Randolph, US Open

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT

1984.) 22...Qh6; 23.h4 is suggested by Marfia. 23...Nxe3; 24.fxe3 (24.Nxc5 Nxc2; 25.Rxc2 b6; 26.Ne6 Rxc2; 27.Nxd8 Qf6 and Black wins.) 24...Bxe3+; 25.Kg2 Rxc2+; 26.Rxc2 Rd2+; 27.Rxd2 Bxd2; 28.Bd5 Qd6; 29.Bf3 b5; 30.Nc3 Bxc3; 31.bxc3 Qd2+; 32.Rf2 Qxc3 with a clear advantage for Black.

E2) 11.Be2 gives Black time to develop. 11...Be6; 12.Qa4 (12.Qd1 Qe7; 13.0-0 Rfd8; 14.Bd2 a6; 15.a3 b5; 16.b4 Bb6; 17.Qc2 Rac8; 18.Rad1 Bg4 is equal according to Smith & Hall.) 12...a6; 13.0-0 b5; 14.Qc2 (14.Qh4 Rc8!; 15.Rd1 Qb6; 16.Bd2 h6; 17.Rac1 Rfd8.

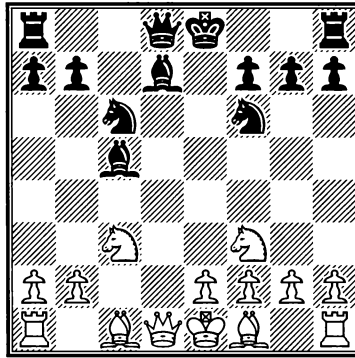


Black has sufficient compensation because White's position is congested and Black's pieces are well-coordinated. 18.Be1 Ng4; 19.h3 Be7; 20.Qg3 Nf6; 21.Nh2 Na5; 22.Ng4 Nxc4; 23.Bxc4 Nc4; 24.b3 Nb2; 25.Rxd8+ Rxd8; 26.Bxe6 Qxe6; 27.Ne2 Bd6; 28.Qh4 Be7; 29.Qh5 Nd3; 30.Rd1 Nxe1; 31.Rxe1 Rd2; 32.Nf4 Qc6; 33.Rd1 g6; 34.Qg4 h5; 35.Nxh5 f5, and Black won, Van der Sterren – Kuijf, Holland Championship 1987)

14...Nb4; 15.Qb1 h6; 16.Bd2 Bg4; 17.Rd1 Qe7; 18.a3 Nc6; 19.Qc2 Rac8; 20.h3 Bh5; 21.Rac1 Ne5; 22.Nxe5 Qxe5; 23.Bxh5 Qxh5; 24.Be1 Bb6; 25.Qe2 Qe5. Black is still down a pawn but there is still plenty of counterplay. 26.Qf3 Rfe8; 27.g3 Qe6; 28.Kg2 Qb3; 29.Qb7 Rb8; 30.Qxa6 Qe6; 31.Kh2 h5; 32.Ne2 h4; 33.a4 hxg3+; 34.Nxg3 Ne4; 35.Nxe4 Bc7+; 36.Nd6 Qe5+; 37.Kg2 Rb6; 38.Qxb6 Bxb6; 39.Nxe8 Qxe8; 40.Rd6 Qe4+; 41.Kg1 Bxe3; 42.Rc8+ Kh7; 43.fxe3 Qb1. Here the game was agreed drawn, Hort–Dankert, Porz 1981.

In any case, the queen usually retreats to d1, and now we aim our bishop at the kingside.

9...Bc5.



10.e3.

White needs to defend the a7-g1 diagonal. The f2-square is weak. In addition, the bishop at f1 must get out so that White can castle. This move is almost always played, and the alternatives have scored very badly for Black, for example:

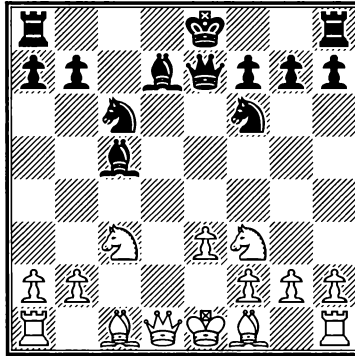
A) 10.Bg5 is easily handled by 10...Qb6 and now if 11.e3 then it is safe to capture the pawn: 11...Qxb2; 12.Bxf6 gxf6; 13.Rc1 Bf5; 14.Bb5 Ba3; 15.Bxc6+ bxc6; 16.Ne2 Qb4+; 17.Nd2 Bxc1; 18.Qxc1 0-0; 19.0-0 c5 with a clear advantage for Black, Chau-Husari, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

B) 10.g3 is slow and the Black initiative grows. 10...Qb6!; 11.e3 Rd8; 12.Bd2 Bb4; 13.Qc2 0-0; 14.Bg2 Bxc3; 15.bxc3 (15.Bxc3 Nb4; 16.Bxb4 Qxb4+; gives Black enough compensation because the pieces are active and there are good possibilities of a kingside attack.) 15...Qc5; 16.0-0 Bf5; 17.Qb2 Bd3; 18.Rfe1 Ne4; 19.Nd4 Ne5; 20.Bc1 b6; 21.Qb4 Qxc3; 22.Ba3 Qxb4; 23.Bxb4 Rfe8; 24.Rac1 a5; 25.Bc3 Rc8; 26.Ba1 Nc5 with a clear advantage for Black, Saritha - Radu, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

10...Qe7.

This is the normal reply, and now White will try to complete development and castle kingside. Black usually castles queenside and engages in a slugfest on the flanks, but recently kingside castling has been adopted as well. That is the approach we will concentrate on.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT



### 11.Be2.

Alternatives are important here, as it is not clear which plan is most promising for White. There are several other stations for the bishop, and White can also elect to guard the b4 square by advancing the a-pawn. 11.Bd2 0-0 should transpose to the main lines.

### SCHARA GAMBIT - OPTIONS AT MOVE 11

1.d4 e6; 2.c4 d5; 3.Nc3 c5; 4.cxd5 cxd4; 5.Qxd4 Nc6; 6.Qd1 exd5; 7.Qxd5 Bd7; 8.Nf3 Nf6; 9.Qd1 Bc5; 10.e3 Qe7; 11.Be2

Option 1: 11.Bb5

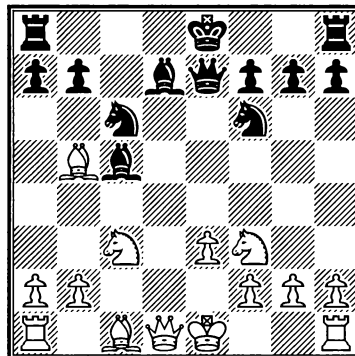
Option 2: 11.a3

Option 3: 11.Bc4

Option 4: 11.Bd3

### SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 11

Option 1: 11.Bb5



**11...0-0-0; 12.Qe2 a6** gives Black a good game:

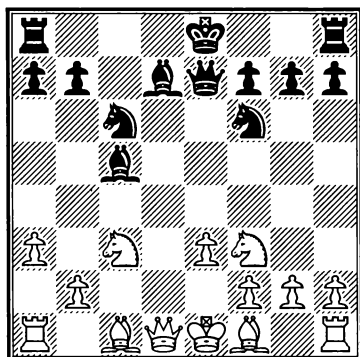
A) 13.Bxa6 bxa6; 14.Qxa6+ Kb8; 15.0-0 Na7 and White does not have sufficient compensation.

B) 13.Bxc6? Bxc6; 14.0-0 Ne4!; 15.Bd2 Nxc3; 16.bxc3 (16.Bxc3 Bb5; 17.Qc2 Bxf1; 18.b4 Bd3; and Black wins.) 16...Qe4! and White is defenseless. 17.c4 Rd6; 18.Bc3 Rg6; 19.Kh1 Rxc2 and White conceded the point in Kuznetsov - Lerner, USSR 1977.

C) 13.Ba4 g5; 14.0-0 Rhe8; 15.a3 g4; 16.Ne1 Kb8; 17.b4 Bd6; 18.Qb2 b5; 19.Bb3 Ne5; 20.Ne2 Nf3+; 21.gxf3 gxf3; 22.Ng3 Be5; 23.Qa2 Bc6; 24.Bb2 Ng4; 25.Bxe5+ Nxe5; 26.Qc2 h5; 27.Qf5 h4 with a clear advantage for Black, Rotariu-Krantz, Correspondence 1982.

## SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 11

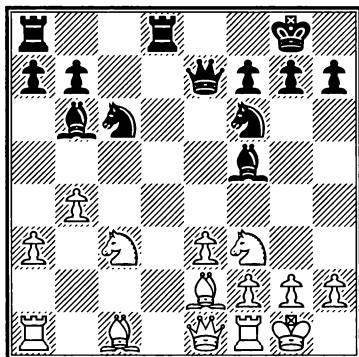
### Option 2: 11.a3



Here kingside castling with **11...0-0** is an example of Black's alternative to the conventional 11...0-0-0. The idea is to take advantage of the open lines on the queenside to annoy the enemy queen. For example:

A) 12.Be2 Rfd8; 13.b4 Bb6; 14.0-0 Bf5; 15.Qe1?! Instead, 15.Qb3 Ng4 is unclear according to Kuijf.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT

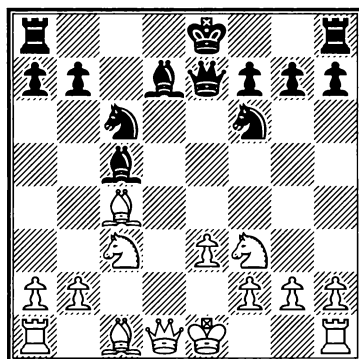


15...Ne5; 16.Bb2 Nd3; 17.Bxd3 Bxd3; 18.Ne2 Rac8?! (18...Ng4! would have been more effective, placing pressure on all of the dark squares on the kingside, for example, 19.Qc3 f6; 20.Qb3+ Kh8 with a clear advantage for Black,) 19.Bd4! Ng4!?!; 20.Bxb6 axb6 (20...axb6; 21.Nfd4 Qe5; 22.g3 Qh5; 23.h4 g5 with a strong attack.) 21.Nfd4 Qe5; 22.g3 Qh5; 23.h4 g5 with a strong attack.

B) 12.Qc2 is best met by 12...Rac8 and on 13.Be2, then 13...g6!? is interesting. 14.0-0 Rfd8; 15.Rd1 Bf5; 16.Rxd8+ Rxd8; 17.Qa4 Ne5; 18.Qh4! Kg7; 19.h3 Nxf3+; 20.Bxf3 h6; 21.Qa4 g5; 22.b4 Qe5!?!; 23.Qb3 Bd6; with a strong attack for Black in Hovenga-Schiller, Groningen 1996.

### SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 11

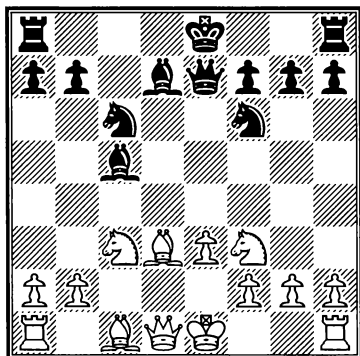
#### Option 3: 11.Bc4



The bishop does not operate effectively here. Black plays 11...0-0; 12.h3 Rad8; 13.Qe2 a6; and the momentum is ours after 14.a3 Bf5; 15.Nh4 Bc8; 16.Nf3 b5; 17.Bd3 Ne5; 18.Bc2 Bb7; 19.e4 Nxf3+; 20.Qxf3 Nxe4; 21.Nxe4 Rfe8; 22.0-0 Bxe4; 23.Bxe4 Qxe4; 24.Qb3 Rd3; 25.Qa2 Rg3 and White resigned in Incutto – L. Bronstein, Buenos Aires 1986.

**SCHARA GAMBIT, MOVE 11**

**Option 4: 11.Bd3**

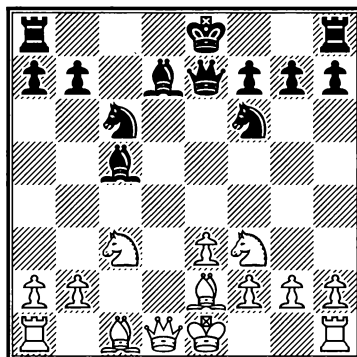


This has recently been tried. 11...g5 (Castling is probably safer.) 12.Nxg5 Rg8; 13.Nge4 0-0-0; 14.Nxf6 Qxf6; 15.Be4! Nb4; 16.0-0 Bg4; (16...Be6!?) 17.Qb3 Be6; 18.Qa4 Bd7; 19.Qa5 Rg5 was seen in Muller & Schreiber–Kullamaa, Postal 1989. 20.Nd5! (20.Bxb7+? is overoptimistic: 20...Kxb7; 21.Ne4 Bc6! and Black wins.) 20...Nxd5; 21.Qxc5+ Bc6; 22.Qc2! keeps the game in unclear waters, according to Kullamaa.

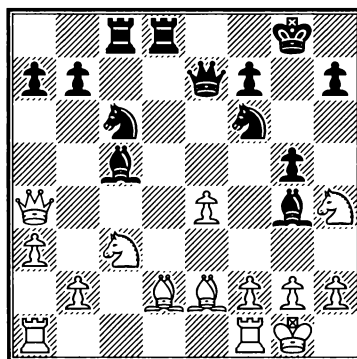
*Returning to the Main Line*

**10...Qe7; 11.Be2.**

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SCHARA GAMBIT



11...0-0. Black can also adopt plans with queenside castling, but this calm approach is strong. 12.0-0 Rfd8! The rooks belong on c8 and d8, in Bronstein's opinion (and mine). 13.a3 Ne5!?: 14.Nd4 Rac8; 15.Bd2 Nc6; 16.Nf3 Bf5; 17.Qa4 g5; 18.e4 Bg4; 19.Nh4.



Martinovsky-Patterson, Correspondence 1988 continued 19...Be6?; 20.Bxg5 h6; 21.Bxh6 Nd4 and Black had a strong initiative. I don't understand why Black didn't capture at e2! It seems as simple as ABC.

19...Bxe2:

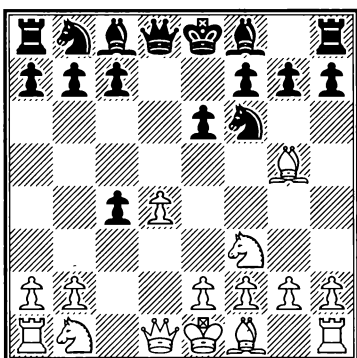
A) 20.Nxe2 Rxd2; 21.Nf5 Qxe4 is good for Black.

B) 20.Bxg5 Bxf1; 21.Nd5 Bxf2+!!; 22.Kxf1 Rxd5!; 23.exd5 Re8; 24.Kxf2 Ne4+; 25.Kg1 Qxg5; 26.dxc6 Qe3+!; 27.Kh1 Nf2+; 28.Kg1 Nh3+; 29.Kh1 Qg1+; 30.Rxg1 Nf2#.

C) 20.Nf5 Qe5; 21.Bxg5 Bxf1; 22.Bxf6 Qxf6; 23.Rxf1 and Black will win.

# QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

## • Pseudo-Vienna •



### OPENING MOVES

- |       |      |
|-------|------|
| 1.d4  | d5   |
| 2.c4  | e6   |
| 3.Nf3 | Nf6  |
| 4.Bg5 | dxc4 |

## OVERVIEW

In this defense, Black grabs a pawn but gives up a little central territory in return. Although White is allowed to play the gambit role here, it doesn't last long, as White has not been able to recover the pawn slowly and usually grabs it back right away. The play can then become very sharp, since White's queen is exposed.

This is a gambit for White, albeit a rather temporary one. Still, that should not discourage us because the play is exceedingly sharp and should appeal to gambiteers on both sides.

The opening has no official name, and can transpose to known lines in the Semi-Slav or Ragozin Defenses. In the Queen's Gambit Accepted, White's bishop is usually entombed by a pawn at e3 before it gets to g5. So we are in one of those semi-transpositional states where very little concrete research has taken place. You may catch your opponent by surprise. Woe unto the unprepared, for there are dangers lurking everywhere!

### QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED *Pseudo-Vienna*

	<b>5.Qa4+</b>	
<i>Options at move 5</i>		<i>121</i>
Option 1:	5.e3	121
Option 2:	5.Nc3	122
Option 3:	5.e4	123
	<b>5...Nbd7; 6.Qxc4</b>	
<i>Options at move 6</i>		<i>124</i>
Option 1:	6.Nc3	125
Option 2:	6.e3	125
Option 3:	6.e4	126
Option 4:	6.Nbd2	126
Option 5:	6.g3	127

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PSEUDO VIENNA

### 5.Qa4+.

This check regains the pawn, but takes up valuable time. Still, it is the overwhelming favorite. Our alternatives include developing the knight to c3 or advancing the e-pawn.

### PSEUDO-VIENNA - OPTIONS FOR WHITE AT MOVE 5

1.d4 d5; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nf3 Nf6; 4.Bg5 dxc4; 5.Qa4+

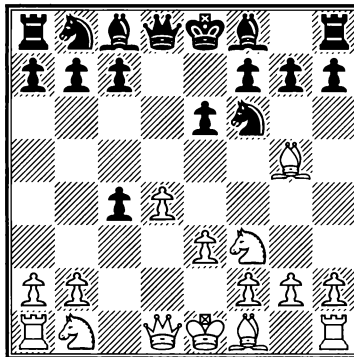
Option 1: 5.e3

Option 2: 5.Nc3

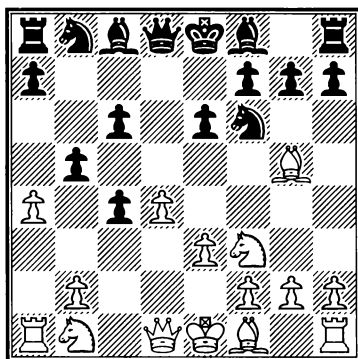
Option 3: 5.e4

### PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 5

Option 1: 5.e3



Black must be bold, and hold on to the pawn! **5...b5; 6.a4 c6.** This is a standard plan for Black, leading to positions similar to the Semi-Slav.



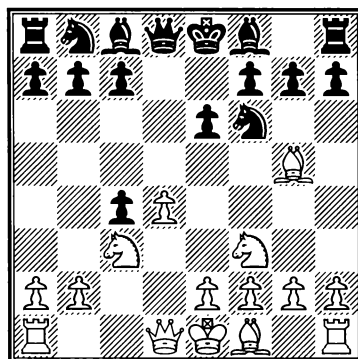
A) 7.Nc3 Bb4; 8.Nd2 Bb7; 9.axb5 Bxc3; 10.bxc3 cxb5 is certainly no worse for Black, Kuligowski – Lukacs, Polanica Zdroj 1984.

B) 7.Be2 Bb4+; 8.Nc3 h6; 9.Bxf6 Qxf6; 10.0-0 a5; 11.axb5 Bxc3; 12.bxc3 cxb5 is an interesting line in the spirit of the Noteboom Variation.

C) 7.axb5 cxb5 8.Be2 Bb7; 9.0-0 a6; 10.b3 cxb3; 11.Qxb3 Nbd7; 12.Nc3 Be7; 13.Rfd1 0-0; 14.Ne5 Nd5; 15.Bxe7 Qxe7; 16.Nd3 Nxc3; 17.Qxc3 Rfc8. Black won in Szollosy – Lukacs, Solymar 1996.

## PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 5

### Option 2: 5.Nc3



5...Bb4 puts pressure on the knight at c3 and allows Black to keep the pawn.

A) 6.e3 b5; 7.Nd2 (7.a4 c6; 8.axb5 cxb5; 9.e4 h6; 10.Bxf6 Qxf6 and Black is better, even though White owns the center. The extra

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PSEUDO VIENNA

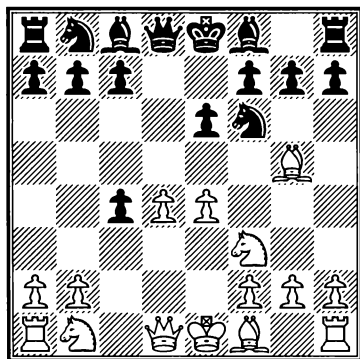
pawn and the bishop pair are just too much, Szobi–Soffer, 1994.) 7...c6; 8.a4 a5; 9.axb5 (9.Qf3 h6; 10.Bxf6 Qxf6; 11.Qxf6 gxf6; 12.axb5 Bxc3; 13.bxc3 cxb5 is a little better for Black.) 9...Bxc3; 10.bxc3 cxb5; 11.Qf3 Qd5 is fine for Black.

B) 6.Qa4+ Nc6; 7.a3 (7.e3 Bd7; 8.Qc2 b5; 9.Ne5 a6 and White does not have quite enough for the pawn, Papadopulos–Sakurai, Caseros 1993.) 7...Bxc3+; 8.bxc3 Qd5; 9.Bxf6 gxf6; 10.Nd2 b5 and Black has at least equality, M.Gurevich – Ribli, Reggio Emilia 1991.

C) A challenging line is 6.e4 b5. Black can also adopt the Vienna Variation here with 6...c5, a very rich and complex line. Keeping in mind our gambit repertoire, however, the Van Scheltinga Variation, a riskier line, is appropriate. 7.a4 c6; 8.e5 h6; 9.exf6 hxg5; 10.fxg7 Rg8; 11.h4 (11.g3 Rxc7; 12.Bg2 Bb7 is unclear, according to Pachman.) 11...g4; 12.Ne5 Rxc7; 13.h5 c5 and Black has a decent position.

### PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 5

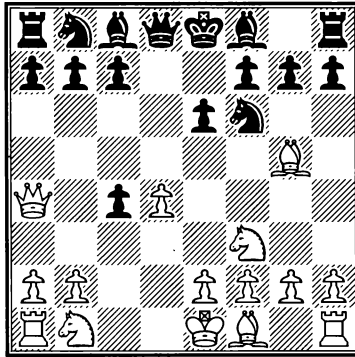
#### Option 3: 5.e4



Here Black can be stubbornly greedy with 5...b5; 6.a4 (6.Nc3 Bb4; transposes to Option 2.) 6...c6; 7.e5 (7.Nc3 Bb4 also transposes above to Option 2.) 7.axb5 cxb5; 8.e5 h6; 9.Bh4 g5; 10.Nxc5 hxc5; 11.Bxc5 Nbd7; 12.Be2 Bb7; 13.Bf3 Qb6; 14.exf6 Bh6; 15.Bxh6 Rxh6 and Black is aiming at a lot of weak White pawns, Rodgaard–Rahman, Manila Olympiad 1992.) 7...h6; 8.Bd2 Ne4; 9.axb5 cxb5; 10.b3 Nc6; 11.bxc4 Nxd4; 12.cxb5 Bc5 and Black had a strong initiative in Yermolinsky–Kaidanov, USA 1992.

*Returning to the Main Line*

White, faced with the determination to hang on to the extra pawn, will often chose to reclaim it with **5.Qa4+**.



**5...Nbd7; 6.Qxc4.** The most consistent move. The capture of the pawn by the queen is usually seen now or in the next few moves. The five alternatives include developing the other knight, advancing the e-pawn, or setting up a kingside fianchetto.

**PSEUDO-VIENNA - OPTIONS AT MOVE 6**

1.d4 d5; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nf3 Nf6; 4.Bg5 dxc4; 5.Qa4+ Nbd7; 6.Qxc4

Option 1: 6.Nc3

Option 2: 6.e3

Option 3: 6.e4

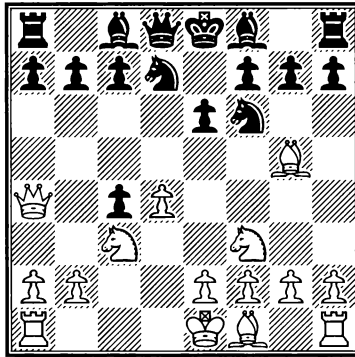
Option 4: 6.Nbd2

Option 5: 6.g3

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PSEUDO VIENNA

### PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 6

#### Option 1: 6.Nc3

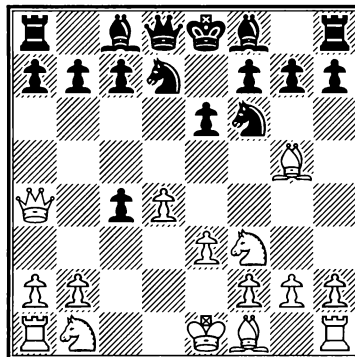


Here Black should continue to develop with **6...Be7**; **7.g3** (7.Rd1 0-0; 8.e4 a6; 9.e5 Nd5; 10.Bxe7 Nxe7; 11.Qxc4 b5; 12.Qd3 Bb7; 13.Be2 c5; 14.0-0 was agreed drawn in Petrosian – Lukacs, Baile Herculane 1984. Or 7.e3 0-0; 8.Qxc4 a6; 9.b4 b5; 10.Qb3 a5; 11.Bxb5 axb4; 12.Na4 Ra5; 13.Bxd7 Qxd7; 14.Nc5 Bxc5; 15.dxc5 Ne4 and Black is better as White has too many liabilities, Dejkalo – Hawelko, Naleczow 1985.)

**7...0-0**; **8.Qxc4 a6**. 9.Bxf6 Nxf6; 10.Bg2 b5; 11.Qb3 Bb7 was agreed drawn in Namgilov–Lukacs, Budapest 1996, but there is plenty of play left. Black has a comfortable Queen’s Indian formation.

### PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 6

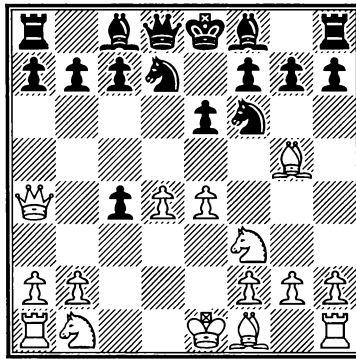
#### Option 2: 6.e3



This is rather slow, and Black can play 5...c6, threatening to support the pawn at c4 via ...b5. Therefore White will capture and play can proceed: 7.Qxc4 Qa5+; 8.Nc3 Ne4; 9.Bh4 (9.Qa4 Qxa4; 10.Nxa4 Bb4+; 11.Ke2 b5. Black had threats on both sides of the board in Vladimirov – Kaidanov, Gausdal 1991.) 9...e5; 10.Be2 Bb4; 11.Rc1 Nb6 was drawn in A.Petrosian-Kaidanov, Lvov 1988, though there is plenty of play in the position. I'd much prefer to be playing Black.

**PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 6**

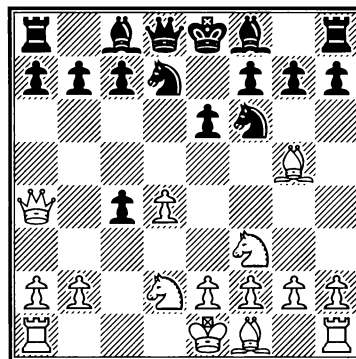
**Option 3: 6.e4**



White occupies the center and is usually met by...Be7, but 6...c6 is consistent with our plans and Black should gain equality after 7.Qxc4 Qa5+; 8.Bd2 Qb6.

**PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 6**

**Option 4: 6.Nbd2**

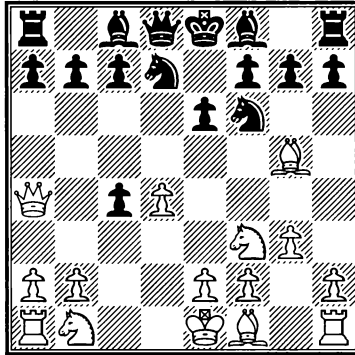


## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PSEUDO VIENNA

The knight is not actively placed here, but it intends to leap to c4 and regain the pawn. Black can slip in 6...c5 and meet 7.Nxc4 with 7...a6. 8.Bxf6 gxf6; 9.dxc5 Bxc5; 10.Qd1 b5; gave Black good counterplay in Smyslov – Nogueiras, Montpellier 1985.

### PSEUDO-VIENNA, MOVE 6

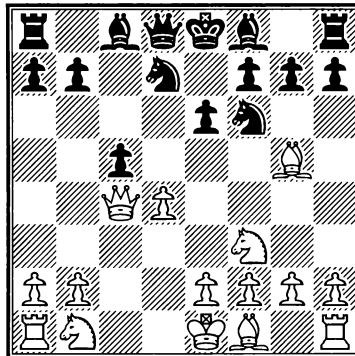
Option 5: 6.g3



The fianchetto plan is very slow, and after 6...a6; 7.Qxc4 b5; 8.Qc1 Bb7; 9.Bg2 Rc8; 10.Qd1 c5. Black already has the initiative, Gheorghiu – Ribli, Lucerne 1985.

### *Returning to the Main Line*

6...c5.



Black attacks the only White pawn in the center. With comfortable development and no weak squares, Black has every reason to

look forward to the middlegame with optimism.

**7.Nc3.** 7.e3 a6; 8.a4 b5; 9.Qc2 Qa5+; 10.Qd2 b4; 11.Bxf6 Nxf6. Black has good counterplay. White has problems developing the knight from b1. 12.Bd3 Bb7; 13.dxc5 Bxf3; 14.gxf3 Bxc5; 15.0-0 Bd6; 16.f4 g5; 17.Na3 gxf4; 18.Nc4 Qd5; 19.Nxd6+ Qxd6; 20.Bb5+ Ke7; 21.Qxd6+ Kxd6; 22.Rfd1+ Nd5; 23.Bc4 Rhg8+; 24.Kf1 fxe3; 25.fxe3 Rg4; 26.Be2 Rh4; 27.Bf3 Ke5; 28.Bxd5 exd5; 29.Rd2 Rc8; 30.Rad1 Rc5; 31.Kg2 Rhc4; 32.Rd4 Rc2+; 33.R1d2 b3. White resigned, Sirnik – Sveshnikov, Nova Gorica 1997.

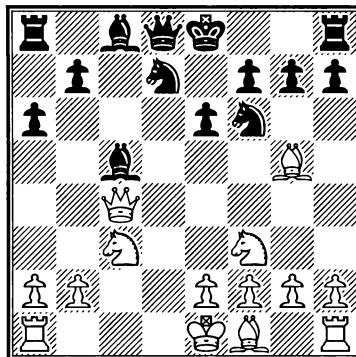
**7...a6.** Black prepares to expand on the queenside with...b5 and...Bb7. **8.dxc5.** White is running out of options. Black's forces are well coordinated and there is little that White can do to maintain any significant advantage in the opening. Other tries:

A) 8.Bxf6 Qxf6; 9.Ne4 Qf4 leads to some forcing play. 10.Nxc5 Nxc5; 11.e3 Qd6; 12.dxc5 Qxc5; 13.Qxc5 Bxc5 but now it is White who must fight for equality in the endgame, since Black holds the bishop pair, Romanishin-Tal, Tbilisi 1988.

B) 8.e3 b5; 9.Qd3 Qa5; 10.Ne5 Bb7; 11.Nxd7 Nxd7 gives Black a flexible formation and more than enough play on the queenside. 12.f3 c4; 13.Qb1 Rc8; 14.Bf4 Nb6; 15.Kf2 b4; 16.Ne4 Bxe4; 17.fxe4 c3; 18.bxc3 bxc3 and Black went on to win in Steinfeld-Kaidanov, Cincinnati 1992.

C) 8.a4? is an instructive blunder. After 8...cxd4!; 9.Nxd4 Ne5, White loses a piece and therefore resigned in Schmiel-Aagaard, Copenhagen 1995.

**8...Bxc5.**



Black can already be satisfied with the result of the opening.

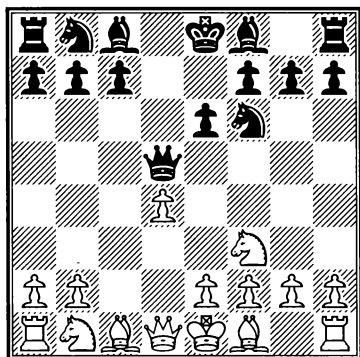
## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PSEUDO VIENNA

**9.b4.** The most aggressive move. 9.e3 b5; 10.Qh4 Bb7; 11.Be2 b4; 12.Na4 Be7; 13.0-0 Qa5; 14.b3 h6; 15.Rac1 0-0; with a good game for Black in Grunberg-Petursson, Moscow 1989.

**9...b5!; 10.Qb3 Be7; 11.Rc1 0-0; 12.e3 Bb7; 13.Be2 h6.** Black has a good game. **14.Bh4 Nd5; 15.Bxe7 Qxe7; 16.a3 Nxc3; 17.Rxc3 Bd5.** Now it is White who needs to find a way to equalize, Ionescu-Vera, Timisoara 1987.

# QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

## • Semi-Exchange Variation •



### OPENING MOVES

- |        |      |
|--------|------|
| 1.d4   | d5   |
| 2.c4   | e6   |
| 3.Nf3  | Nf6  |
| 4.cxd5 | Qxd5 |

## OVERVIEW

This is not the most common move order for White, but it is used to try to steer the game into particular lines of the popular Exchange Variation. Players of the White side will of course expect you to capture with the pawn, entering the Exchange Variation. That is objectively the best move, but the fact that White has chosen 3.Nf3 instead of 3.Nc3 gives Black other options.

As gambiteers we are willing to take a few risks. At the very least, we like to push our opponents into unfamiliar territory. Here we avoid all the boring theory of the Exchange Variation by capturing with the queen instead of the e-pawn, and thus entering the domain of the **Semi-Exchange Variation**. The drawback is the limited mobility of our bishop at c8. Eventually we will solve this problem with a queenside fianchetto.

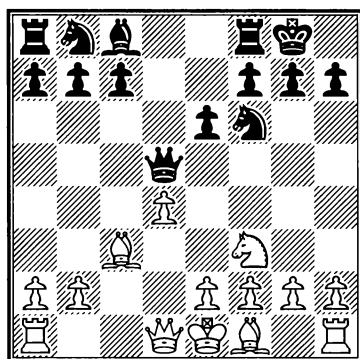
### QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED *Semi-Exchange Variation*

Continuation

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SEMI-EXCHANGE

**5.Nc3.** 5.g3 Bb4+; 6.Bd2 Bxd2+; 7.Qxd2 Ne4; 8.Qc2 Qa5+; 9.Nc3 Nxc3; 10.bxc3 c5; 11.Bg2 cxd4; 12.Nxd4 e5; 13.0-0 0-0; 14.Nf5 Bxf5; 15.Qxf5 Nc6; 16.Be4. The game is about even, Helgason-Bosman, Netherlands Team Championship 1996.

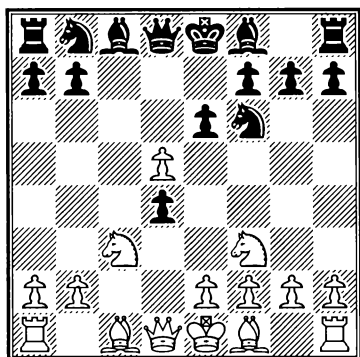
**5...Bb4.** 5...Qa5 is also playable. **6.Bd2.** 6.Qa4+ is countered by 6...Nc6. **6...Bxc3;** **7.Bxc3** 0-0.



**8.e3 b6.** 8...Rd8 is another plan, with the idea of...Nbd7-f8-g6. **9.Bd3 Ba6!** 9...Ne4; 10.0-0 Bb7; 11.Ne1 c5; 12.f3 Nxc3; 13.bxc3 is an acceptable alternative, from Schulien-Floyd, Columbus 1985. I think that after 13...Nc6!, instead of 13...Qg5, Black would have had a good game. **10.Bxa6 Nxa6;** **11.Qe2 Nb8;** **12.0-0 Ne4.** Black is certainly no worse. The bishop vs. knight endgames are not a problem because White's bishop is not very active. The game might continue 13.Nd2 Nxc3; 14.bxc3 c5.

# QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

## • Podolsk Variation •



### OPENING MOVES

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| 1.d4   | Nf6    |
| 2.Nf3  | d5     |
| 3.c4   | e6     |
| 4.Nc3  | c5     |
| 5.cxd5 | cxd4!? |

## OVERVIEW

The **Podolsk Variation** is relegated to just a minor mention in one important opening book, but it is very interesting. White can immediately capture at d4 or give a check from a4. Both plans are considered to yield a small advantage for White, but there are many untapped resources for Black.

The basis of Black's counterplay is in the center, where the massive wall of pawns cannot stay intact for long. The ideas are similar to the Schara Gambit. In some ways, you can think of this as a distant cousin. Sometimes you will gambit your d-pawn, but compensation will come in the form of opportunities to harass enemy forces in the center and on the queenside.

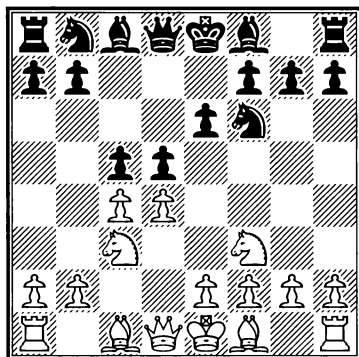
This is an exciting opening which has not had as much attention as it deserves. Your opponents are not likely to be familiar with it, so make sure you study the options for White. Often White will try to get out of "theory" quickly when confronted with this obscure opening.

### QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED *Podolsk Variation*

<b>6.Qxd4</b>	
<i>Options at move 6</i>	<b>133</b>
Option 1: 6.Qa4+	134
Option 2: 6.Nxd4	137
Option 3: 6.dxe6	138

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PODOLSK VARIATION

Before we get to the specifics of the Podolsk Variation, we need to say a few words about the position after the fourth move order: **4.Nc3 c5**.



The Semi-Tarrasch Defense in the Queen's Gambit Declined gives Black a comfortable game without risking the isolated d-pawn positions of the full Tarrasch. In fact, here it is White who often winds up with the isolated pawn. Black's plan of development is obvious: ...Nc6, ...Be7, ...0-0, and then a resolution of the central situation. White can liven things up by capturing at d5, where Black usually responds by recapturing with the knight. But ours is a gambit repertoire, and we have something quite different in mind!

**5.cxd5**. The alternatives to this move are explored in the next two chapters.

**5...cxd4!?** The Podolsk Variation leads to many interesting and complicated positions. We will concentrate on **6.Qxd4** as the main line. The alternatives are captures at d4 with the knight, or e6 with the pawn, or at d4, but with the queen via a check at a4.

### PODOLSK VARIATION - OPTIONS AT MOVE 6

**1.d4 Nf6; 2.Nf3 d5; 3.c4 e6; 4.Nc3 c5; 5.cxd5 cxd4; 6.Qxd4**

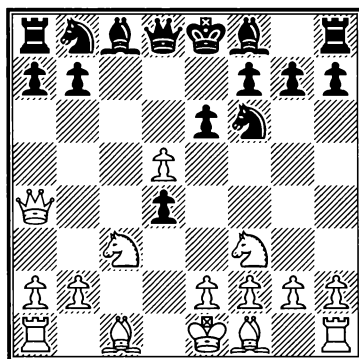
Option 1: 6.Qa4+

Option 2: 6.Nxd4

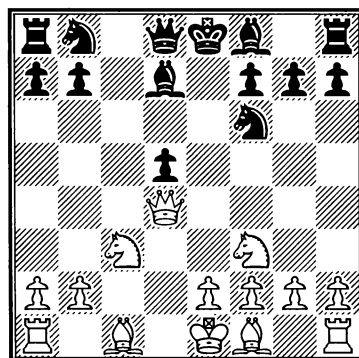
Option 3: 6.Nxd4

PODOLSK VARIATION, MOVE 6

Option 1: 6.Qa4+



The check draws an enemy bishop to d7, where it blocks the d-file. 6...Bd7; 7.Qxd4 exd5.

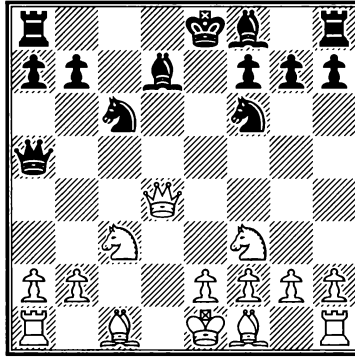


White has a target: the isolated pawn at d5. But Black has easy development for the pieces and a chance to win an important tempo with...Nc6. Such fighting players as Gligoric and Tal have been willing to defend the Black side.

A) 8.Qe5+ Be7; 9.Nxd5 Nxd5; 10.Qxd5 Nc6; 11.a3 Qc7; 12.e3 Rd8; 13.Qe4 0-0 gives Black typical counterplay. Development is almost complete, while White still has to develop both bishops and castle. 14.Bd3 g6; 15.Qc4 Bf6; 16.0-0 Be6; 17.Qc2 Qd6; 18.Be2 Na5; 19.Bd2 Nb3; 20.Rad1. Black's strong piece play makes up for the missing pawn. 20...Qb6; 21.Bb4 Rc8; 22.Qb1 Rfe8 was drawn in Sanguinetti-Castillo Larenas, Mar del Plata 1950.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PODOLSK VARIATION

B) 8.Nxd5 Qa5+; 9.Nc3 Nc6.

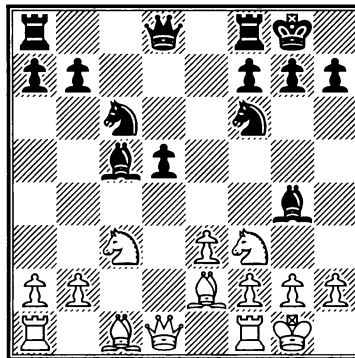


White must now retreat the queen. Two retreats have been seen.

B1) 10.Qd1 Ne4; 11.Qd5 Nc5; 12.Ne5 0-0-0; 13.Nxc6 Bxc6; 14.Qc4 b5 (14...Ne4! is more logical.) 15.b4 (15.Qxf7 Ne4 is powerful for Black.) 15...Qc7; 16.Nxb5 Bxb5; 17.Qxb5 Qe5; 18.Qc4 Qxa1; 19.bxc5 Qd4; 20.Qa6+ Kb8; 21.Qb5+ Kc7; 22.Qa5+ Kc8; 23.Qa6+ was drawn in Timofeyev-Kapellko, Soviet Union 1960.

B2) 10.Qe3+ Be6; 11.Bd2 0-0-0; (11...Bc5; 12.Qg5 0-0; deserves consideration.) 12.Qf4 Bb4; 13.Rc1 Bxa2; 14.Nxa2 Bxd2+; 15.Nxd2 Qxa2 and the game was balanced in Kekki-Tella, Finland Championship 1996.

C) 8.e3 Nc6; 9.Qd1 Bc5; 10.Be2 Bg4; 11.0-0 0-0 reaches a typical Tarrasch position.

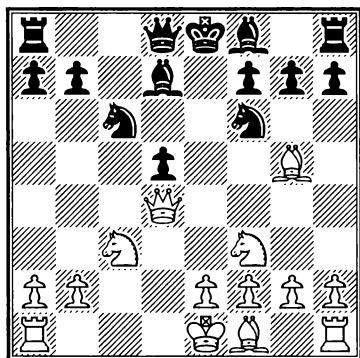


Black's d-pawn is weak, but with the bishop at e2, instead of fianchettoed at g2, it is hard to build significant pressure against it.

For example: 12.b3 a6; 13.Bb2 Qd6; 14.h3 Bf5; 15.Bd3 Bxd3; 16.Qxd3 Rad8; 17.Rad1 Rfe8; 18.Ne2 Ne4; 19.Ned4 Ne5; 20.Qe2 Nxf3+; 21.Qxf3 Qe5; 22.Ba1 Bd6; 23.g3 Qg5; 24.Kg2 Be5; 25.Qg4 Qe7; 26.Rc1 g6; 27.Rc2. In this interesting position a draw was agreed in Schussler–Binham, World Youth Team Championship 1981.

D) 8.Ne5 Nc6; 9.Nxc6 bxc6; 10.e4 Qb6! solves all of Black's problems in the opening.

E) 8.Bg5 is the main line. 8...Nc6.



The position is taking on characteristics of the Tarrasch Defense. At first glance it seems that White has significant pressure at d5 and f6, but Black can hold.

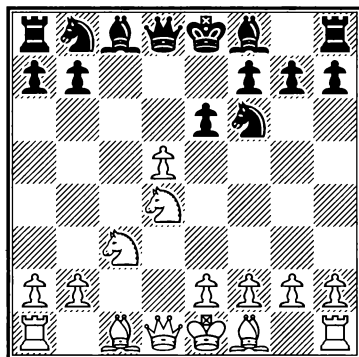
E1) 9.Bxf6 Nxd4; 10.Bxd8 Nxf3+; 11.exf3 Rxd8; 12.Nxd5 Bc6; 13.Nc3 (13.Nc7+ Kd7; 14.Nb5 Bb4+; 15.Kd1 Ke7+; 16.Kc2 Rd2+; 17.Kb3 Bc5; 18.Re1+ Kf6. Black was clearly better in Huss-Kuijf, Mitropa Cup 1995.) 13...Bb4; 14.Rd1 0–0; 15.Be2 Rfe8; 16.a3 Bxc3+; 17.bxc3 Rc8! Even in the endgame Black had enough compensation for the pawn in Castillo Larenas–Trifunovic, Mar del Plata 1950.

E2) 9.Qd2 is natural, and play continues 9...Be6; 10.e3 Bb4; There are other moves, and placing the bishop at e7 is popular, but I think this move is acceptable and leads to some exciting play. 11.Bd3 (11.0–0–0 Ne4; 12.Bxd8 Nxd2; 13.Rxd2 Rxd8; 14.Be2 Rc8; 15.Rhd1 0–0. Black will attack on the queenside, while White concentrates on the pawn at d5. When necessary, Black can capture at c3.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PODOLSK VARIATION

### PODOLSK VARIATION, MOVE 6

#### Option 2: 6.Nxd4



White does not achieve anything by this plan: Black simply plays 6...Nxd5.

A) 7.Ndb5 Qa5; 8.Bd2 Nxc3; 9.Nxc3 Nc6 hasn't been tested, but looks like an equal game.

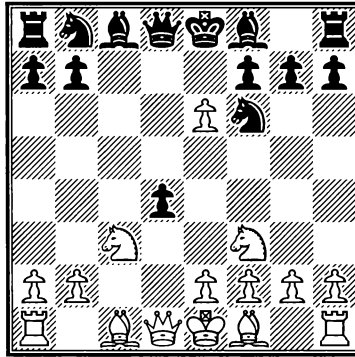
B) 7.Nxd5 Qxd5; 8.e3 (8.Qd3 e5; 9.Nb3 Qxd3; 10.exd3 Nc6 and Black has a structural advantage, Desurmont – Weisz, Meudon 1992.) 8...Be7 followed by castling is solid for Black.

C) 7.e4 Nxc3; 8.bxc3 e5; 9.Bb5+ (9.Nf3 Qxd1+; 10.Kxd1 Nc6; 11.Rb1 Bc5 is better for Black, as White has no compensation for the weak pawns.) 9...Bd7; 10.Bxd7+ Qxd7; 11.Nf3 Qxd1+; 12.Kxd1 f6; 13.Rb1 can be met by 13...Na6 since 14.Rxb7 0-0-0+ wins the rook.

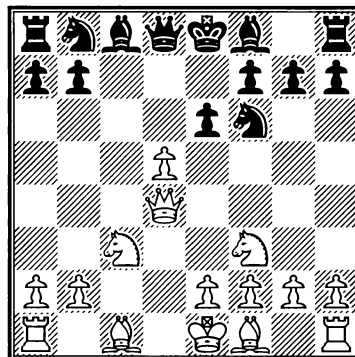
D) 7.Bd2 is slow and ugly. 7...Bc5; 8.Qa4+ (8.Nb3 Bb6; 9.g3 0-0; 10.Bg2 Nxc3; 11.Bxc3 Qe7; 12.0-0 e5; 13.a4 Na6; 14.a5 Bc7 gave Black a comfortable position in Novikov – Korzubov, Moscow 1991.) 8...Bd7; 9.Qc4 is Szily–Kluger, Hungarian Championship 1954. Here Black should play 9...Qb6 with a solid position and the initiative.

PODOLSK VARIATION, MOVE 6

Option 3: 6.dxe6



6...dxc3; 7.exf7+ Ke7 is a bit better for Black, but White does have some compensation for the piece. 8.Qb3 (8.Qxd8+ Kxd8; 9.bxc3 Be6; 10.Ng5 Bd5; doesn't give White nearly enough for the piece, despite the three pawns. The pawn at f7 will fall eventually, though Black need not be in any hurry to go after it. For example 11.f3 Ke7; 12.Rb1 h6; 13.e4 hxg5; 14.exd5 b6; 15.Bxg5 Kxf7; 16.c4 Nbd7 and White's position has some holes, with the prospect of advancing the extra pawns dim indeed.) 8...Qa5; 9.bxc3 Be6!; 10.Qxb7+ Nbd7; 11.Qb4+! (11.Qxa8 Qxc3+; 12.Kd1 Qxa1; 13.Qxa7 Bb3+!; 14.Kd2 Kxf7; and Black should win. 15.Ne5+ Qxe5; 16.axb3 Bb4+ wraps things up quickly.) 11...Qxb4; 12.cxb4 Bxf7; 13.a4 Rc8; 14.Ba3 Bd5! and as pieces leave the board White will have a hard time holding on to the pawns.



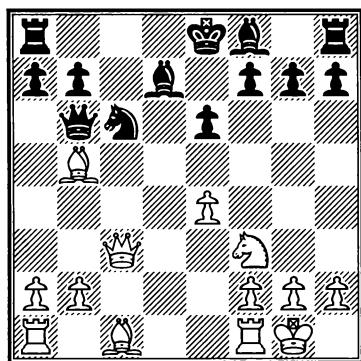
## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PODOLSK VARIATION

### *Returning to the Main Line*

6. Qxd4 Nxd5; 7.e4 is the most consistent plan. It is true that 7.Bg5 f6; 8.Nxd5 exd5; 9.Bd2 leaves Black with some weaknesses, but the momentum shifts after 9...Nc6 and now 10.Qe3+ (10.Qa4 Qb6; 11.Bc3 Bd7; 12.e3 Ne5; 13.Qh4 Nxf3+; 14.gxf3 Be6; 15.Bd3 0-0-0; 16.Rc1 Kb8 and White has to find a home for the king, Goldin – Ruban, Novosibirsk 1993.) 10...Kf7 (10...Be7 is much safer. Black is playing here with a little too much ambition. The correct plan is to castle quickly and then play...Be6-f7 with a solid position. White needs to spend a lot of time on development and cannot interfere.) 11.g3 Qb6; 12.Bg2 Bc5; 13.Ng5+ Kf8; 14.Qf4 Nd4; 15.Rc1 Qb5; 16.Bf1 h6; 17.Qc7 hxc5; 18.Rxc5 Qe8; 19.Qd6+ Kg8; 20.Qxd5+ and White is obviously better, Su. Polgar – Ruban, Groningen 1993.

7...Nxc3; 8.Qxc3. 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8; 9.bxc3 gives White nothing, for example 9...Bc5; 10.Ne5 Ke7; 11.Nd3 Bb6; 12.Ba3+ Ke8; 13.Ne5 Nd7; 14.Bb5 Bc7; 15.Nd3 a6; 16.Ba4 b5; 17.Bb3 Bb7 and Black went on to win in Burn-Lasker, Paris 1900.

8...Nc6. This is certainly the correct way to play. *The Encyclopedia of Chess Openings* considers only 8...Bd7. 9.Bb5. 9.Bd2 Bd7; 10.Be2 Rc8; 11.0-0 f6; 12.Qb3 Qb6; 13.Qxb6 axb6; 14.e5 Nxe5; 15.Nxe5 fxe5; and despite the pawn weaknesses Black is no worse, Cifuentes Parada-Vedder, Wijk aan Zee. 9...Bd7; 10.0-0. 10.Bd2 Qb6; 11.Be2 Bc5; 12.0-0 0-0; 13.Rac1 Nd4; 14.Nxd4 Bxd4. The game was swinging toward Black in Kachar– Pavlovichev, Podolsk 1991. 10...Qb6.



Black has no structural weakness and just needs to complete kingside development to obtain equality. Therefore Black looks to the future and tries to exchange queens.

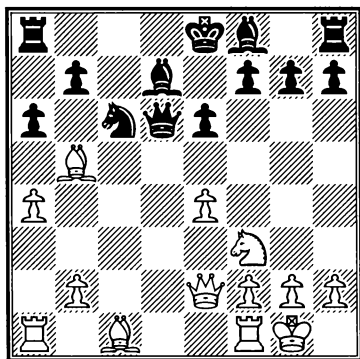
**11.a4** is the main line, and alternatives fail to impress.

A) 11.Ba4 Qb4; 12.Qxb4 (12.Qc2 Qc5; 13.Qe2 Be7; 14.Bf4 Qa5; 15.Bb3 0-0; 16.Rfd1 Rfd8; 17.a3 Be8 gave Black a solid position in Arkhangelsky – Pavlovichev, Podolsk 1991.) 12...Bxb4; 13.Rd1 f6; 14.Be3 Ke7; 15.a3 Bd6; 16.Rd2 Rhd8; 17.Rad1 Bc7; 18.Bc5+ Ke8; 19.Bb3 Na5; 20.Ba2 Ba4; 21.Rxd8+ Rxd8; 22.Re1 was agreed drawn in Belov-Pavlovichev, Podolsk 1990.

B) 11.Be2 Qb4; 12.Qxb4 Bxb4; 13.Be3 f6; 14.Rfd1 e5; 15.Ne1 0-0 was not bad for Black in Berovski-Vedder, Hallsberg 1993.

**11...Qc5; 12.Bd2.**

12.Qd3 (12.Be3 Qxc3; 13.bxc3 a6; 14.Be2 Bd6; 15.Rfb1 0-0-0. If Black feels like castling kingside then 15...Nd8 is an option. 16.Rb2 Bc7; 17.Bc5 Na5; 18.Nd4 Nc6; 19.Nc2 Be8; 20.Rab1 Rd2; 21.Kf1 Na5; 22.Ke1 Rd8; 23.Be7 Rd7; 24.Bb4 Nc6 was about even in Rohde – Ruban, Tilburg 1992.) 12...Qd6; 13.Qe2 a6 is a significant alternative for White.



A very interesting position. White has some open lines to play with and the tempo of the game is brisk.

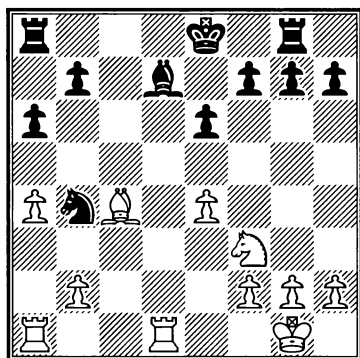
A) 14.Rd1 Qc7; 15.Bc4 (15.Bxc6 Bxc6; 16.Bg5 h6; 17.Be3 Bd6 was quickly drawn in Gurevich – Epishin, Biel 1993.) 15...Na5; 16.Bd5 Bb4; 17.Bg5 0-0; 18.Rac1 Qb8; 19.Rd4 exd5; 20.Rxb4 Nc6; 21.Rb3 dxe4; 22.Qxe4 Re8. Black is doing fine, Makarov–Pavlovichev, Podolsk 1979.

B) 14.e5!? presents more challenges. 14...Qc7; 15.Bd3 Nb4; 16.Be4 Bc6; 17.Bd2 Bxe4; 18.Qxe4 Nd5 (18...Qc6 deserves consideration, as the endgame does not pose many dangers, though White's control of d6 is annoying.) 19.Rac1 Qd7; 20.Rc2 Be7; 21.Qg4 Kf8; 22.Rfc1 h5; 23.Qd4 Qd8; 24.h4 g6; 25.Ng5 Kg7; 26.Ne4 Bxh4; 27.Nd6 Be7;

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • PODOLSK VARIATION

28.Nxb7 Qb6; 29.Nc5 was played in Pugachev–Mochalov, Kurgan 1994. Now I think Black's best is 29...Rab8, good enough for equality.

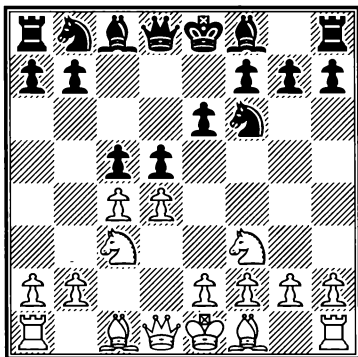
12...Qxc3; 13.Bxc3 a6; 14.Bc4. 14.Be2 f6; 15.e5 Bb4; 16.Bxb4 Nxb4; 17.Rac1 Ke7 was equal in Van der Sterren–Sosonko, Amsterdam 1994. 14...Rg8; 15.Rfd1 Bb4; 16.Bxb4 Nxb4.



17.Ne5 Bc6; 18.Bb3 Ke7; 19.f3. 19.Rd4 f6; 20.Ng4 a5; 21.e5 f5; 22.Ne3 Rgd8; 23.Rad1 Rxd4; 24.Rxd4 Na6 led to a draw in Gorbatov – Pavlovichev, Podolsk 1991. 19...Rgd8; 20.Kf2 Be8; 21.Ke2 f6; 22.Nc4 b5; 23.Ne3 Nc6; 24.Rxd8 Rxd8; 25.Bd1 Nd4+. Black had the initiative in Kamsky–Topalov, Linares 1994.

# QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

## • 5.Bg5 and Miscellaneous •



### OPENING MOVES

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.Nf3 Nf6
- 4.Nc3 c5

## OVERVIEW

In the last chapter we saw the consequences of a capture at d5. White can keep up the symmetry by playing e3, which we'll look at in the next chapter, but there are some minor alternatives which must be examined first.

The most dangerous of these is the deployment of the bishop at g5. The position is quite different from that of the Pseudo-Vienna, where Black did not have a pawn at c5. Here, we can chip away at White's pawn center by capturing at d4. This will lure the enemy knight to d5.

We can then open up the center with the powerful move ...e5! Even though this pawn has already moved once, the second step comes with gain of tempo since the White knight will be forced to flee with its tail between its legs. The initiative will be ours!

### QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

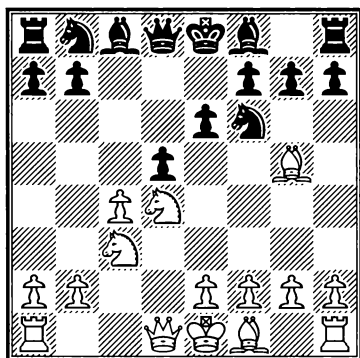
#### 5.Bg5 and Misc

- 5.Bg5 cxd4;  
6.Nxd4 e5; 7.Nf3

<i>Options at move 7</i>	143
Option 1: 7.Bxf6	144
Option 2: 7.Ndb5	145
Option 3: 7.Nc2	146
Option 4: 7.Nb3	146

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • 5.BDg & MISC

**5.Bg5.** 5.g3 dxc4 is very awkward for White, who will not regain the pawn for a long time, if ever. 5.Bf4 cxd4; 6.Nxd4 Bc5 is nothing special for White. The bishop does not seem to do anything at f4. 5...cxd4; 6.Nxd4.



Now Black has many plans, but we will choose the most aggressive one, in keeping with the spirit of our repertoire. **6...e5!** Black's center is precarious, but it is moving forward at an alarming rate. **7.Nf3.**

The retreat to f3 is considered best. Still, there are three other open destinations, and White can also interpose a capture at f6 which can disrupt Black's pawn structure. We will look at them before returning to the retreat to f3, which is the main line.

### QGD: 5.Bg5 - OPTION AT MOVE 7

**1.d4 d5; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nf3 Nf6; 4.Nc3 c5; 5.Bg5 cxd4; 6.Nxd4 e5; 7.Nf3**

Option 1: 7.Bxf6

Option 2: 7.Ndb5

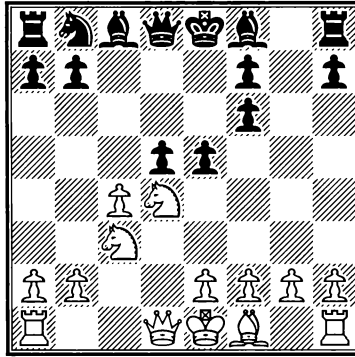
Option 3: 7.Nc2

Option 4: 7.Nb3

QGD: 5.Bg5 & MISC, MOVE 7

Option 1: 7.Bxf6.

Black plays 7...gxh6.



This does not cause Black any long-term problems because the pawn formation in the center is very strong.

A) 8.Nf3 d4; 9.Nd5 Be6; 10.e4 Nc6; 11.Qa4 (11.Bd3 Bg7; 12.0-0 Rg8 leads to an unclear position with chances for both sides, Hakola - Rantsi, Postal 1990.) 11...Bh6; 12.Bd3 0-0; 13.Nh4 Re8; 14.Qd1 f5; 15.Nxf5 Bxf5; 16.exf5 e4 and Black was ready to increase the pressure with 17...Qg5, Rudenko-Zvorykina, Rostov 1953.

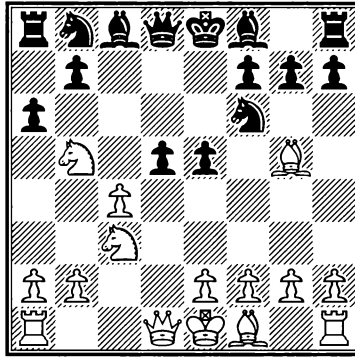
B) 8.Ndb5 a6 transposes below.

C) 8.Nc2 is best handled by advancing the d-pawn. 8...d4; 9.Nd5 Be6; 10.e4 f5; undermines White's position. 11.Bd3 Bxd5; 12.cxd5 fxe4; 13.Bxe4 Qa5+; 14.Qd2 Qxd2+; 15.Kxd2 Bh6+; 16.Ke2 Nd7 and the endgame is better for Black, as the following two examples show. 17.Rhd1 (17.Na3 Nf6; 18.f3 0-0-0; 19.Nc4 Rhe8, Foltys-Stahlberg, Lodz 1938.) 17...Ke7; 18.g3 Nc5. Hodges-Rosenthal, New York 1916.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • 5.Bd5 & MISC

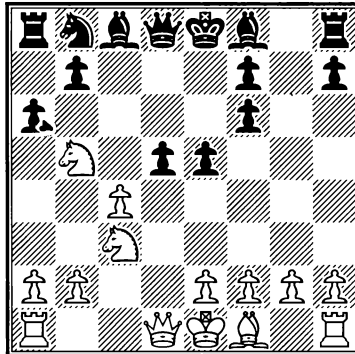
QGD: 5.Bg5 & MISC, MOVE 7

Option 2: 7.Ndb5



A) 8.Qa4 Bd7; 9.cxd5 Qb6; 10.Be3 Bxb5; 11.Bxb6 Bxa4; 12.Nxa4 Bb4+; 13.Kd1 Nbd7 and the game is balanced, with White's bishop pair playing only a minor role in Savon-Krogius, Tbilisi 1967.

B) 8.Bxf6 gxf6 is even better for Black here than the exchange at move 7.



B1) 9.Qa4 Bd7; 10.cxd5 Bxb5; (10...Qb6 is even stronger.) 11.Nxb5 axb5; 12.Qxa8 (12.Qxb5+ Nd7; 13.b4 Qc7; 14.Kd2 Rc8; 15.Qd3 Bxb4+; 16.Ke3 Qb6+ and White resigned, Fontan - Di Salvio, Italy 1987.) 12...Bb4+; 13.Kd1 Qxd5+; 14.Kc2 0-0; 15.a4 Qe4+; 16.Kd1 Rd8+; 17.Kc1 Rc8+; 18.Kd1 Qc2#, Levine-Liebowitz, San Francisco 1980.

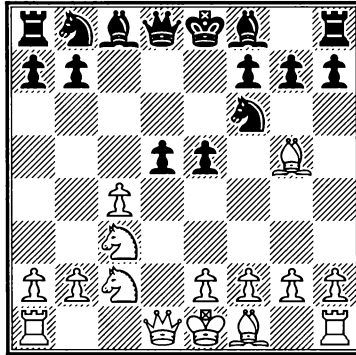
B2) 9.Na3 d4; 10.Nd5 Be6; 11.Qa4+, Cherepkov-Sergievsy, Kiev 1965, lets Black establish a strong game with 11...Nc6.

C) 8.Na3 d4; 9.Ncb1 Nc6; 10.g3 Qb6; 11.Bc1 Bb4+; 12.Nd2 e4 is crushing, Kovacs-Dely, Hungary 1969.

D) Finally, 8.Nxd5 is a blunder which is punished quickly. 8...axb5; 9.Nxf6+ Qxf6; 10.Bxf6 Bb4+; 11.Qd2 Bxd2+; 12.Kxd2 gxf6. White resigned, Fine–Yudovich, Moscow 1937.

**QGD: 5.Bg5 & MISC, MOVE 7**

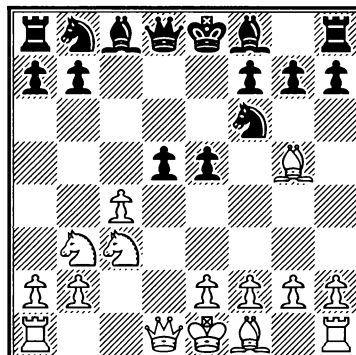
**Option 3: 7.Nc2**



After 7...d4, White can try 8.Nd5 Be6; 9.e4. Although White has a lock on d5 and a strong pin at f6, Black can now continue to develop in peace and the passed d-pawn is a real asset. 9...Be7; 10.Bxf6 Bxf6; 11.Bd3 0-0; 12.0-0 Bg5; 13.Re1 Nd7; 14.b4 Rc8 and Black had pressure on the queenside, Gulko–Renet, Cannes 1987.

**QGD: 5.Bg5 & MISC, MOVE 7**

**Option 4: 7.Nb3**

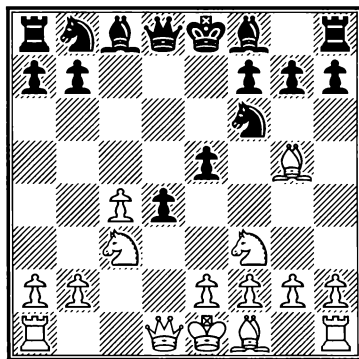


## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • 5.BDG & MISC

Again Black responds by playing 7...d4. This time 8.Nd5 should be greeted with 8...Be7. 9.Nxe7 Qxe7; 10.e3 Nc6 has been used as Black by attack master Tal. 11.Be2 (11.exd4 exd4+; 12.Be2 h6; 13.Bf4 Bg4; 14.f3 Nh5; 15.Bd6 Qxd6; 16.fxc4 Nf4; 17.0-0 0-0 is comfortably better for Black, Ortega – Estevez Morales, Santiago 1986.) 11...h6; 12.Bxf6 Qxf6; 13.exd4 exd4; 14.0-0 0-0 and the d-pawn is a thorn in White's side. Tarrasch would have loved this position! 15.Nc5 Bf5; 16.Nd3 Rfe8; 17.Re1 Qg6; 18.Nf4 Qg5; 19.Nd5 d3; 20.Bf1 Nd4; 21.h4 Qxh4; 22.Rxe8+ Rxe8; 23.Ne3 Qg5; 24.Nxf5 Ne2+; 25.Bxe2 dxe2; 26.Nxh6+ Qxh6; 27.Qc1 Re5 and White resigned in Ortega–Tal, Yerevan 1986.

### *Returning to the Main Line*

We return now to the retreat of the knight to f3. After 7.Nf3 Black thrusts the d-pawn forward in reply. 7...d4.



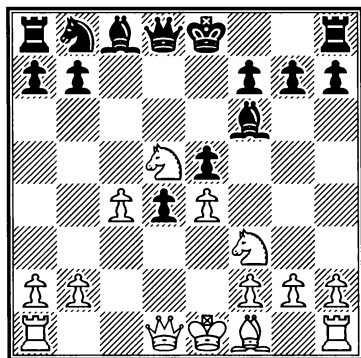
Now White must again shift a knight. 8.Nd5. None of the alternatives deserve more than cursory examination, though there are some tactical goodies for Black:

A) 8.Nb5 Nc6; 9.Qa4 Bd7; 10.Rd1 a6; 11.Na3 Nb4; 12.Qb3 Qa5; 13.Nd2 Ne4; 14.Bh4 Nc5; 15.Qg3 and even a beginner should be able to spot the finish! 15...Qxa3; 16.bxa3 Nc2#, Muller–Veihnacht, Mannheim 1937.

B) 8.Nxe5 Nc6; 9.Nxc6 bxc6; 10.Nb1 (10.Ne4 falls for a simple trap. If you don't see it, look at the next variation.) 10...Rb8; 11.b3 Qa5+; gives Black sufficient compensation, I think. For example 12.Bd2 Qe5!; 13.g3 Ne4 with an active position.

C) 8.Ne4?? loses a piece: 8...Nxe4!; 9.Bxd8 Bb4+; 10.Nd2 Bxd2+; 11.Qxd2 Nxd2; 12.Kxd2 Kxd8, Depirou–Collins, 1991.

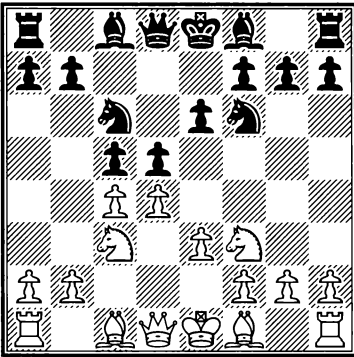
8...Be7; 9.Bxf6. 9.Nxe7 Qxe7; 10.e3 (10.g3 Nc6; 11.Bg2 0-0; 12.0-0 h6; 13.Bxf6 Qxf6 was better for Black in Szabados – Euwe, Venice 1948.) 10...dxe3; 11.Bxe3 0-0; 12.Be2 is Anton – Nielsen, Postal 1977. Now 12...Rd8 would have given Black the initiative. **9...Bxf6; 10.e4.** 10.g3 Nc6; 11.Nd2 Bg5; 12.Bg2 0-0; 13.0-0 Kh8; 14.Qc2 f5 gave Black a good attack in a simultaneous exhibition game Vizantiadis-Fischer, Athens 1968.



**10...dxe3; 11.fxe3.** 11.Nxe3 Qxd1+; 12.Rxd1 e4; 13.Nd4 Nc6; 14.Nb5 0-0; 15.Rd2 is even, according to the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings*. **11...e4; 12.Nd2 0-0; 13.Qc2 Re8; 14.Nxe4 Bxb2; 15.Qxb2 Rxe4; 16.Bd3 Re8; 17.0-0 Nd7.** Black has a solid position and nothing to worry about, Bolbochan – Stahlberg, Mar del Plata 1945.

# QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

## • Symmetrical Variation •



### OPENING MOVES

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.Nc3 c5
- 4.e3 Nf6
- 5.Nf3 Nc6

## OVERVIEW

This is the **Symmetrical Variation** of the Tarrasch, also known as the “boring” line. At some point, the symmetry must come to an end. I have tried to identify interesting variations for Black, though they may not be as strong, objectively, as playing the traditional waiting game.

Some of the most brilliant games in chess have arisen out of the quiet lines, where the battle is postponed until the opening is over. You don't need to force the issue if the position doesn't have a dynamic character.

There are two main themes to watch out for. Either side can advance the a-pawn one square, planning a capture of the enemy c-pawn followed by expanding on the queenside. This plan can be prevented by placing a pawn on the a4/a5 square, but that creates a hole on the b-file which may be exploited.

So there is a tense positional stand-off. The fight for the tempo rages on.

### QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED *Symmetrical Variation*

6.a3	
<i>Options at move 6</i>	<i>150</i>
Option 1: 6.cxd5	150
Option 2: 6.Bd3	152
Option 3: 6.Be2	153
Option 4: 6.h3	154
Option 5: 6.dxc5	154

Because it illustrates the main themes of the opening, we'll take **6.a3** as our main line. The concrete threat is **7.dxc5** and **8.b4**. We will cut across this plan by capturing at **d4** first. We will see the same capture used against quiet developing moves by White. Still, there are two pawn captures available to White, and we must look at all these alternatives before proceeding to the main line.

**SYMMETRICAL VARIATION - OPTIONS AT MOVE 6**

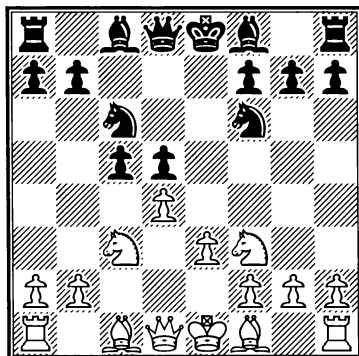
1.d4 d5; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nc3 c5; 4.e3 Nf6; 5.Nf3 Nc6; 6.a3

- Option 1: 6.cxd5
- Option 2: 6.Bd3
- Option 3: 6.Be2
- Option 4: 6.h3
- Option 5: 6.dxc5

**SYMMETRICAL VARIATION, MOVE 6**

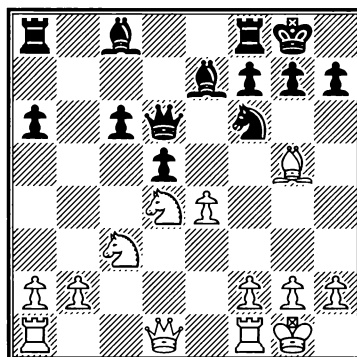
**Option 1: 6.cxd5**

Black plays **6...exd5**.

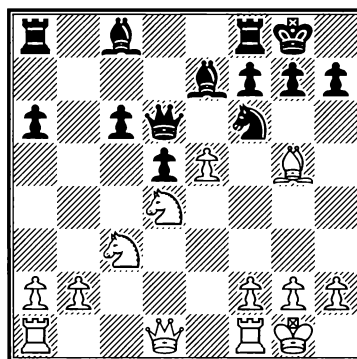


Now White breaks the symmetry by giving check. **7.Bb5 a6; 8.Bxc6+ bxc6; 9.0-0 Bd6; 10.dxc5 Bxc5; 11.e4!** This creates the famous isolated d-pawn. **11...0-0. 11...Nxe4?; 12.Nxe4 dxe4; 13.Qxd8+ Kxd8; 14.Ng5** is a trick only a beginner would fall for. **12.Bg5 Be7; 13.Nd4 Qd6.**

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SYMMETRICAL VARIATION



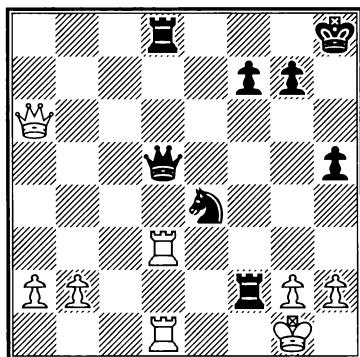
The straightforward 14.exd5 cxd5; 15.Re1 would have brought White a decent game, though 15...Bg4 might be sufficient. Instead, 14.e5? is a much too clever method of isolating the pawn.



14...Qxe5; 15.Nxc6 Qxg5; 16.Nxe7+ Kh8; 17.Nxc8 Raxc8; 18.Qd3. This position is not easy to evaluate objectively. If Black plays passively then White will dominate the e-file and go to work on the weak isolated pawn. Larsen realizes that by giving up some material, he can take over the critical files. 18...Rfd8!? So Black's plan is clear—give up the a-pawn and allow White to enjoy two connected passed pawns, but in return Black is going to take all of the files in the center and advance his own pawn. 19.Qxa6 d4; 20.Ne2 Rc2!; 21.Rad1.

White is of course prepared to give up his b-pawn for the powerful Pd4, but Larsen does not oblige. 21...Qe5!; 22.Ng3 (22.Nc1 Ng4!; 23.g3 Qh5; 24.h4 Nxf2!!; 25.Rxd4 Nh3+; 26.Kh1 Rdc8 was demonstrated by Brondum, in response to a published note that 22.Nc1

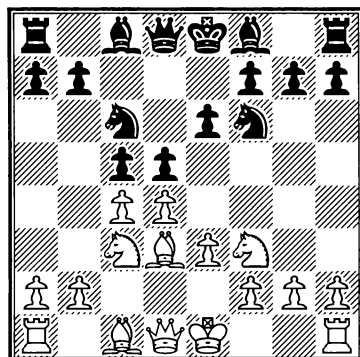
would have improved White's chances!) 22...h5!; 23.Rfe1 Qd5; 24.Re2 d3!; 25.Re3 (25.Rxc2 dxc2; 26.Rxd5 c1Q+; 27.Nf1 Rxd5) 25...Rxf2!; 26.Ne4. Of course not 26.Kxf2 because then 26...Ng4+ picks up the stray rook with multiple threats. 26...Nxe4; 27.Rexd3.



The game comes to an end with a tactical blow. 27...Rf1+!!; 28.Rxf1 Qc5+. White resigned, because 29.Kh1 is met by Nf2+; and either the smothered mate or a back rank mate follows. Evans – Larsen, Dallas 1957.

## **SYMMETRICAL VARIATION, MOVE 6**

**Option 2: 6.Bd3**

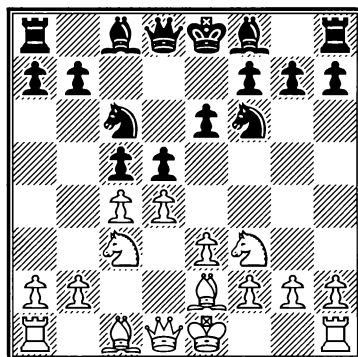


Black can eliminate the central pawns to good effect: 6...cxd4; 7.exd4 dxc4; 8.Bxc4 Be7; 9.0-0 0-0; 10.a3 a6; 11.Ba2 (11.Re1 b5; 12.Ba2 b4 is similar.) 11...Qd6; 12.Be3 Rd8; 13.Rc1 b5; 14.Qe2 b4; gave Black good counterplay in Fries Nielsen-Short, Esbjerg 1984.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SYMMETRICAL VARIATION

### SYMMETRICAL VARIATION, MOVE 6

#### Option 3: 6.Be2



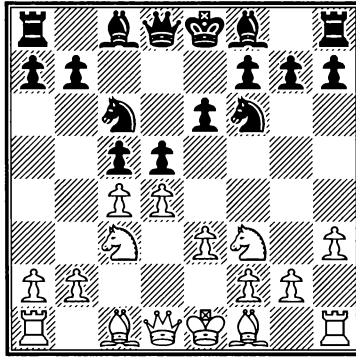
Black plays similarly here: 6...dxc4; 7.Bxc4 cxd4, and this has been doing very well for Black, so we will gladly include it in our repertoire.

A) 8.exd4 Be7; 9.0-0 0-0; 10.Re1 (10.Bf4 a6; 11.Rc1 b5; 12.Bd3 Bb7; 13.Re1 Rc8; 14.Bb1 Qd7; 15.Ne5 Nxe5; 16.Bxe5 ended in an immediate draw in Nuvoloni – Huguet, French Team Championship 1996. Or 10.Be3 a6; 11.a4 Nd5; 12.Qe2 Nxc3; 13.bxc3 Bd7; 14.Bd3 Bf6; 15.Rfb1, which went no further before peace was declared in Ivanisevic – Todorovic, Yugoslav Championship 1996.) 10...b6; 11.a3 (11.Bg5 Bb7; 12.a3 Rc8; 13.Ba2 Nd5; 14.Ne4 Bxg5; 15.Nexg5 h6. Black was at least equal in Gemesi – Bernei, Hungarian Team Championship 1996.) 11...Bb7; 12.Ba2 Rc8; 13.Qd3 (13.Bf4 Na5; 14.Ne5 Nd5; 15.Bd2 Bf6; keeps the game balanced, Fatalibekova-Polushkina, Yalta 1996.) 13...Qd6; 14.Bg5 Rfd8; 15.Rad1 Ng4; 16.Ne4 Qc7; 17.Bxe7 Nxe7; 18.Neg5 Nf5; 19.Nxe6 fxe6. Mastrokoukos – Haritakis, Aegina 1996.

B) 8.Nb5 is not a problem: 8...dxe3; 9.Qxd8+ Kxd8; 10.Bxe3 Bb4+; 11.Ke2 Ke7; 12.a3 Bd6; 13.Rhd1 Bb8. (But not 13...Be5?; 14.Nxe5 Nxe5; 15.Bc5+ of Salinas – Leiva, Santiago 1997.) 14.Bc5+ Ke8; and Black will eventually drive out the invaders and enjoy the luxury of an extra pawn.

SYMMETRICAL VARIATION, MOVE 6

Option 4: 6.h3



This has little to do with the game and Black can continue merrily with development. 6...Be7; 7.a3 0-0; 8.dxc5 Bxc5; 9.b4 Be7; 10.Bb2 b6; 11.cxd5 exd5; 12.Bb5 Bd7; 13.0-0 a5; 14.Bxc6 Bxc6; 15.b5 Bb7; 16.Nd4 Rc8; 17.Rc1 Qd7 and Black is fine Krasevec–Ruzzier, Portoroz 1997.

SYMMETRICAL VARIATION, MOVE 6

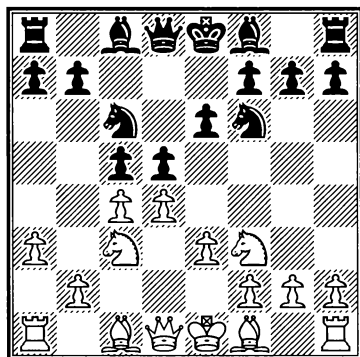
Option 5: 6.dxc5

6... Bxc5. The dissolution of tension in the center does not leave White with much to play for. 7.Be2 0-0; 8.0-0 a6 (8...b6; 9.a3 a5; 10.b3 Bb7; 11.Bb2 Rc8; 12.cxd5 exd5; 13.Nb5 is Castillo–Berntsen, Yerevan Olympiad 1996. Black should just play 13...Re8.) 9.a3 dxc4; 10.Bxc4 b5; 11.Ba2 b4; 12.Na4 Ba7; 13.Qc2 Bb7; 14.Nc5 Bxc5; 15.Qxc5 Rc8; 16.axb4 Ne4; 17.Qc4 Ne5 with equality, Kurbel – Speckert, Vienna 1996.

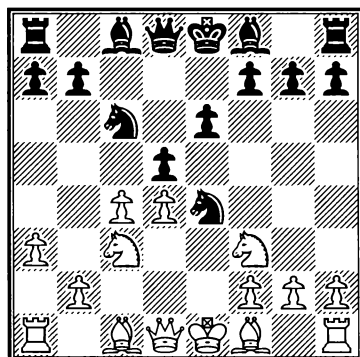
## QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED • SYMMETRICAL VARIATION

### *Returning to the Main Line*

Now let us consider the main line after 6.a3.



As promised, we will capture in the center. 6...cxd4; 7.exd4 Ne4!?

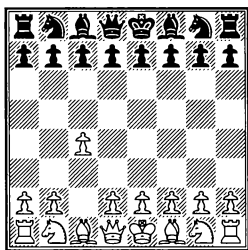


This bold move has been used by Viktor Korchnoi, and is considered best by the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings*.

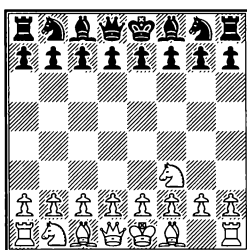
**8.Bd3.** 8.Nxe4 dxe4; loses a pawn for White. A more reasonable alternative is 8.Qc2 Nxc3; 9.Qxc3 Be7; 10.c5. Now 10...a5; 11.Bb5 0-0; 12.b3 Bd7; 13.0-0 b6; 14.Bxc6 Bxc6; 15.b4 was played in Inkiov-Suba, Sochi 1983.

**8...Nxc3; 9.bxc3 dxc4; 10.Bxc4 Be7.** Black has no problems and will develop the remaining pieces quickly. 11.Bf4 Qa5; 12.Qd3 0-0; 13.0-0 Bf6; 14.Rfe1 Ne7; 15.Be5 Bd7; 16.Bxf6 gxf6; 17.Nd2 Bc6; 18.Re3 Ng6. Black had a defensible kingside and good prospects for counterplay in the center and on the queenside, since the pawn at c3 is weak, Bellon Lopez – Kortchnoi, Malmo 1996.

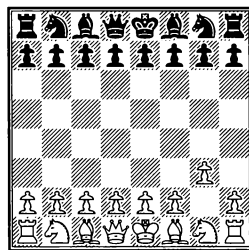
# SOME ADVICE ON FLANK OPENINGS



1.c4



1.Nf3



1.g3

## OVERVIEW

Suppose White stubbornly refuses to occupy the center with 1.d4 or 1.e4? Can you still play a gambit? The answer is obviously yes, you can throw pawns at your opponent whenever you wish. But if White is crawling into a shell and playing defensively, the risks of gambit play are much greater.

There are quite a number of gambit approaches for Black against moves such as 1.c4 and 1.Nf3, but they are not even close to being sound. If you insist on playing a gambit, you can check out the offerings in books devoted to unorthodox openings.

A wiser choice is to try to steer the game into the paths we have already discussed. We will use transpositional lines to reach the key positions. That means an early ...d5 and ...e6 are part of the equation, often with ...c5 thrown in for good measure. The Tarrasch formation is what we are after. When the pawns are established, develop both knights, bring the bishop to e7 castle on the kingside.

Let's look at some concrete examples.

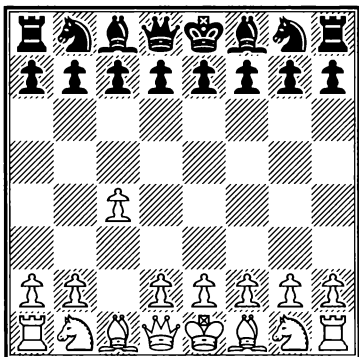
### SOME ADVICE ON FLANK Openings

#### *Various Flank Openings*

English Opening	157
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## FLANK OPENINGS

### ENGLISH OPENING

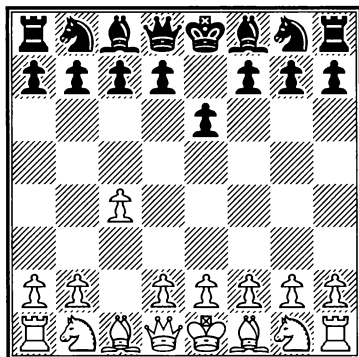


#### OPENING MOVES

1.c4

There are gambits available, such as 1...b5, but they don't get much for the pawn. We'd like to get to the Schara Gambit, and we can try to get there by adopting the Agincourt Defense.

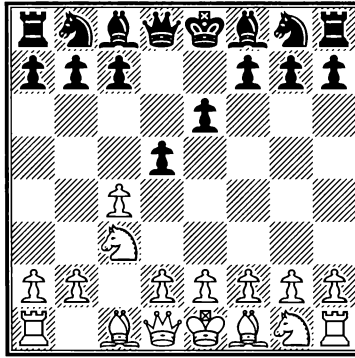
1...e6.



Our idea is to meet 2.d4 with 2...d5, reaching our normal defenses. White does not have to cooperate, of course, but sooner or later White must do something with the d-pawn.

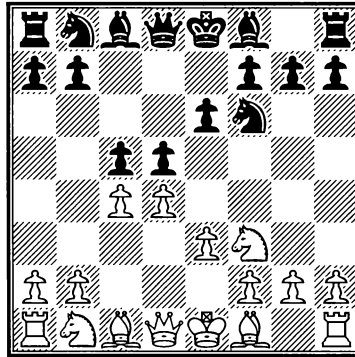
**2.Nc3.** 2.Nf3 d5 leads to the Reti Openings, which we will discuss below under 1.Nf3 d5; 2.c4 e6. The moves 2.e4 d5 lead to a harmless variation of the French Defense. The exotic Diemer-Duhm Gambit arises on 3.d4. You can then play 3...dxc4; 4.Nc3 Nf6 and answer 5.f3 with 5...c5! For further analysis of this line, see *Unorthodox Chess Openings*.

2...d5.



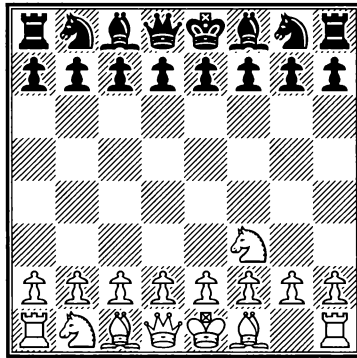
Black now threatens to play ...d4. White can play 3.d4, but that transposes back to our main strategies against 1.d4. Attempting to avoid the transposition with 3.e3, Black can nevertheless work toward our repertoire by developing normally with ...Nf6 and ...c5.

3...Nf6; 4.d4 c5.



Now we are back on our home turf!

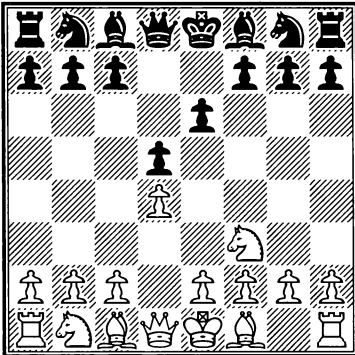
# ZUKERTORT AND OTHER OPENINGS WITH 1.Nf3



## 1.Nf3.

White can also open the game with the Zukertort or Reti strategies involving an immediate Nf3. We reply 1...d5. Now White can choose from among several plans, the most common of which are the **Zukertort Opening** (2.d4), **Reti Opening** (2.c4), and the **King's Indian Attack** (2.g3). Let's look at each.

## ZUKERTORT OPENING

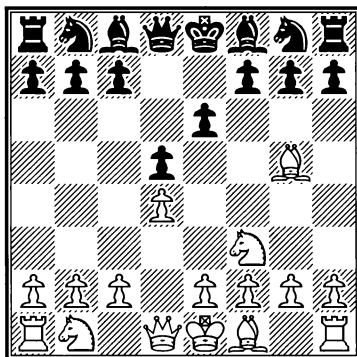


**OPENING MOVES**

1.Nf3 d5  
2.d4 e6

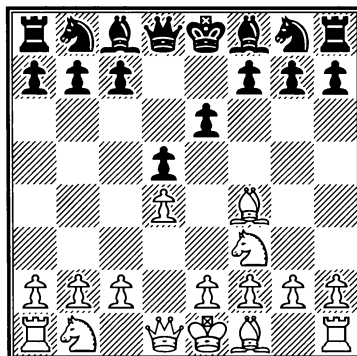
Now White still has a chance to enter our repertoire with 3.c4, or can choose from other plans. We will consider the Torre Attack, and then the London System.

A) 3.Bg5



The Torre Attack is not so effective without a knight at f6. Black can, of course, play 3...Be7, but this allows White to exchange dark-squared bishops and leaves White with a lasting advantage. The strange-looking 3...Qd6 is a more interesting option which gets away from book lines.

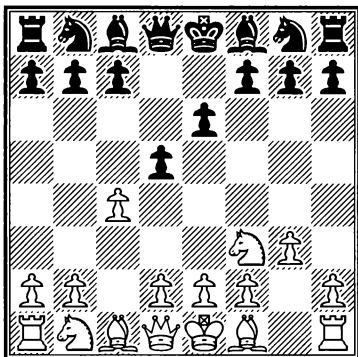
B) 3.Bf4



This is the London System, an annoyingly boring opening. We can strike at the center right away by playing 3...c5. Then we can meet 4.e3 with 4...Qb6, exploiting the offside position of the White bishop.

## FLANK OPENINGS

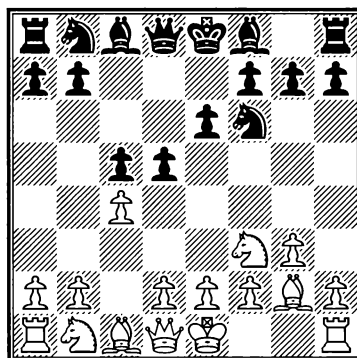
### RETI OPENING



#### OPENING MOVES

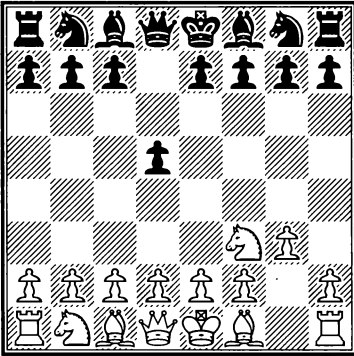
- 1.Nf3 d5
- 2.c4 e6
- 3.g3

The fianchetto plan is popular but we can adopt our standard Tarrasch plan. 3...Nf6; 4.Bg2 c5.



Now if White captures at d5, we can recapture with the knight or the pawn. The latter option leads to the Classical Variation Tarrasch Defense, which is outside our repertoire plans, though it is a very exciting. Using the knight to regain the pawn is the Semi-Tarrasch Defense, and it is a good opening. You can follow up with ...Nc6, ...Be7, ...0-0, and ...Be7-f6.

**KING'S INDIAN ATTACK**



**OPENING MOVES**

- 1.Nf3 d5
- 2.g3

This opening has been used by many good players. The idea is to play a King's Indian Defense in reverse, for example 2...c5; 3.Bg2 Nc6; 4.0-0 e5; 5.d3. Since White has only limited gambit options against the normal King's Indian Defense, logic suggests that gambit play by Black will be futile here.

Since White is committed to a fianchetto approach, Black can set up a barricade in the light squares and leave the enemy bishop biting on granite.

**2...Nf6; 3.Bg2 Bf5; 4.0-0 e6; 5.d3 h6.**

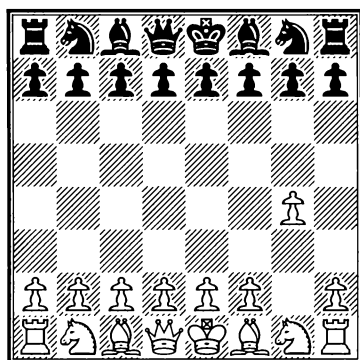
Black will continue with ...Be7, ...0-0, and White will find it difficult to make progress. Although we cannot safely adopt gambit strategies against the flank openings, we can still play aggressively after we get our pieces developed to useful squares and punish White for neglecting the center.

# SOME ADVICE ON UNORTHODOX OPENINGS

We have discussed only four plans for White at the first move: 1.e4, 1.d4, 1.c4 and 1.Nf3. These four moves dominate the chess scene at both professional and amateur levels. Other moves are generally considered inferior. There are 16 other legal moves, and they all fall into the category of unorthodox openings. These are seen primarily in amateur contests, and none of them pose any great dangers to Black.

Indeed, some are so bad that Black can well afford to gambit a pawn in the opening. Usually, however, Black gets a good game just by developing pieces on normal squares, castling, and then going to work on any weaknesses in the enemy camp. Grab the center with ...e5 and ...d5 if you can.

You can find discussion of hundreds of unorthodox openings in *Unorthodox Chess Openings*, also from Cardoza Publishing, but it is not necessary to study any of them just in order to get a good game in the opening. When someone tosses rubbish such as 1.g4 your way, you need only look at the board and evaluate the consequences of the move. Let's take a look:



What has White done to the position with this reckless move?

1. The kingside is weakened and White is unlikely to find safe haven for his king there.

2. The bishop at f1 is likely to move to g2.
3. If Black play ...Nf6, White can attack it by advancing the g-pawn.
4. The pawn at g4 is undefended
5. White has neglected to occupy the center

This leads us to consider 1...d5, which opens up an attack on the pawn at g4 by the bishop at c8, occupies the center, and blocks the a8-h1 diagonal which will be the one occupied by White's bishop. After 2.h3, defending the pawn, Black plays 2...c6, shoring up the defenses in the center. If White takes no action to prevent it, Black will follow with 3...e5. Then the minor pieces will be developed and Black can safely castle.

Against unorthodox openings all you need to do is figure out what your opponent is up to and follow basic opening principles to develop your pieces properly. If you don't fall for any tactical traps you are likely to wind up with a very comfortable position, and may well gain the upper hand, even in the opening.

# LAST THOUGHTS

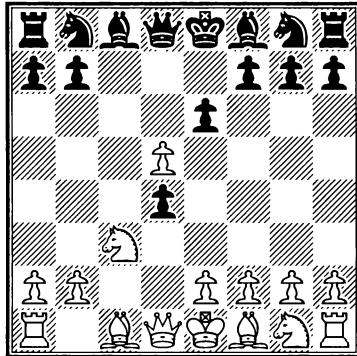
We've seen a lot of exciting gambits in the preceding chapters. You are now ready to go out and try them in competitive play. Don't be afraid to play a gambit even if you have Black against a much higher rated opponent. Gambit play will keep the pressure on the enemy, and it is so easy to make a mistake when on defense!

For example, here is a game I played against the third highest ranked player in the recent Masters tournament at San Francisco's famous Mechanic's Institute. The atmosphere of America's oldest chess club surely provided some inspiration for this game, which helped propel me to a second place finish when I wasn't even ranked in the top ten players!

## IZUMAKAWA - SCHILLER

San Francisco (Mechanics Masters), December 1997

1.d4 d5; 2.c4 e6; 3.Nc3 c5; 4.cxd5 cxd4.

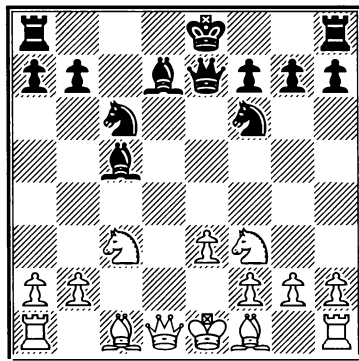


I chose the Schara Gambit for this game primarily because I was in an aggressive mood. My previous game was an upset of a grandmaster, and I wanted to keep my perfect score going. To some, this was a surprising choice because my opponent is a superb tactician

[chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

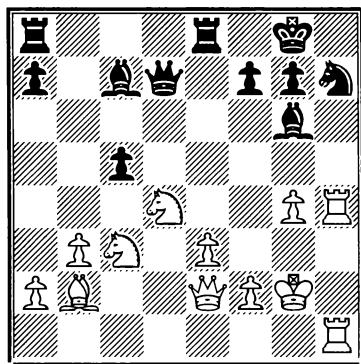
and I had some previous success against him with quiet, boring positional play. However, I have great faith in the Schara Gambit, and nearly 25 years of experience with it.

5.Qa4+ Bd7; 6.Qxd4 exd5; 7.Qxd5 Nc6; 8.Qd1. Against this odd move order I could have considered the endgame gambit with 8...Be6, but sticking with the main lines was more prudent. 8...Nf6; 9.e3 Bc5; 10.Nf3 Qe7.



We have reached the main line of the Schara Gambit via transposition, but here Izumakawa tries an unusual plan.

11.Bb5 0-0; 12.0-0 Rfd8. Better 12...Rad8. I realized later that rooks belong at e8 and d8. Typical wrong rook move! 13.Qe2 Bg4; 14.Bxc6 bxc6; 15.b3 Nd7; 16.h3 Bh5; 17.Bb2 Bd6.



18.Nb1. Intending Nd2. Probably 18.Rfd1 was better. 18...Be5; 19.g4 Bg6; 20.Nc3 h5; 21.Rfd1 hxg4. Opening the h-file is very double-

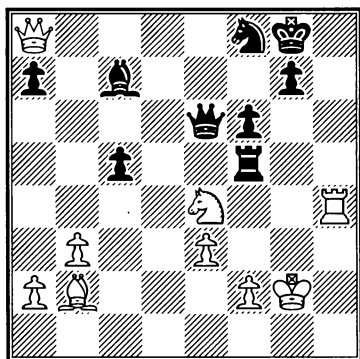
## LAST THOUGHTS

edged! **22.hxg4 Bc7**; **23.Kg2! Nf6**; **24.Nd4 Re8!** To discourage any advance of the f-pawn. This is why the rook should have been at e8 all along. **25.Rh1 Qd7**; **26.Rh4 c5**; **27.Rah1 Nh7**. The defensive plan is ...f6, ...Ng5 and the initiative comes back to me.

**28.Nf5 Rad8**; **29.Qf3 f6**; **30.Rd1**. Last move of time control (30/90), with 17 seconds left. Izumakawa has been in deep time pressure for the last 7 moves.

**30...Qe6**; **31.Rxd8 Rxd8**; **32.Ne4?** (32.Qb7! and the position is still a mess.) **32...Rd5!** A dangerous square for the rook, with lots of tricks involving Ne7 to calculate. **33.Nc3?!** A poor choice in a difficult position. **33.Ba3 Bxf5**; **34.gxf5 Rxf5**; **35.Nxc5 Rg5+**; **36.Kf1** was correct.)

**33...Bxf5**; **34.gxf5 Rxf5**; **35.Qa8+ Nf8**. A computer may prefer White, but I was very happy to reach this position as Black! **36.Ne4**.



White seems to have the better attack, but Black turns the tables with the next move. **36...Qa6!** This covers all key squares, not only eliminating threats from the enemy queen, but also threatening a deadly infiltration at e2.

**37.a4 Qe2**; **38.Ba3 Qf3+**; **39.Kf1 Qxe3!** The endgame has been calculated. White has nothing better than to exchange queens with a tactical trick. **40.Qd5+ Rxd5**; **41.fxe3 Ne6**; **42.Ke2 Ba5!** **43.Nxc5?** A quick death, but the alternative was prolonged suffering. And Izumakawa had almost exhausted his remaining hour. **43...Nxc5**; **44.Bxc5 Rxc5**; **45.b4 g5!** **46.Rd4 Re5**; **47.bxa5 Rxa5**; **48.Kd3 Kf7**; **49.Kc3 Ke6**; **50.Kb4 Re5**; **51.e4 g4**; **52.Kb3 g3**; **53.Rd3 g2**. White resigned.

## • SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING •

### **Scandinavian Defense**

*Center Counter Defense: The Portuguese Variation* by Selby Anderson, Pickard & Sons.

*Trends in the Scandinavian, Vol.2* by Susan Lalic, Trends Publications.

### **Schara Gambit**

*Von Hennig-Schara Gambit* by Eric Schiller, Chess Enterprises.

### **Queen's Gambit Declined**

*Play the Queen's Gambit* by D. Marovic, Cadogan.

### **Various openings with 1.d4**

*Complete Defense to the Queen Pawn Openings* by Eric Schiller, Cardoza Publishing.

### **Flank Openings**

*Flank Openings* by Raymond Keene, British Chess Magazine.

### **Unorthodox Openings**

*Unorthodox Chess Openings* by Eric Schiller, Cardoza Publishing.

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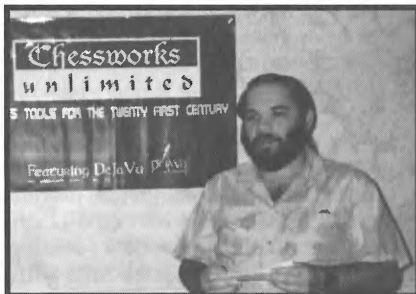
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