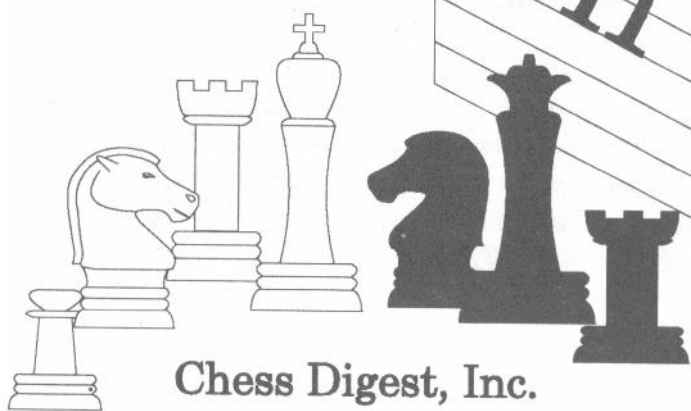


The
Noteboom
Variation

GM Andrew Soltis

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Chess Digest, Inc.

The Noteboom Variation
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Zuger-Klinger, Bern 1991	5
Allcock-Abrahams, London University-Oxford University Match 1925	9
CHAPTER ONE	13
White Experiments at Move Five	
1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4	
A 5 Ne5	14
B 5 e3	15
C 5 e4	18
D 5 g3	20
E 5 Bg5	21
Illustrative Games	
(1) Murey-Sveschnikov, Moscow 1991	23
(2) Pahtz-Lukov, Halle 1987	26
CHAPTER TWO	30
White Restrains with 5 a4	
1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bb4	
A 6 g3	20
B 6 Bd2	32
C 6 e4	34
Illustrative Games	
(3) Seirawan-Korchnoi, Bad Kissingen 1981	35
(4) Lupanov-Korodyov, Leningrad Junior Championship 1954	38
CHAPTER THREE	42
Main Line 5 a4 -- White Varies at Move Eight	
1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bb4 6 e3 b5 7 Bd2 a5	
A 8 Ne5	43
B 8 Qc2	46
Illustrative Games	

(5) Pahtz-Flear, Mondorf 1991	48
(6) Djurhuus-Volzhin, Oakham 1992	51
CHAPTER FOUR	55
Main Line with 8 axb5 and 11 d5	
1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bb4 6 e3 b5	55
7 Bd2 a5 8 axb5	
Illustrative Games	
(7) Ionov-Moroz, Tallin 1984	60
(8) Rogers-krasenkov, Hastings 1993-94	62
CHAPTER FIVE	66
Main Line with 8 axb5 and 11 bxc4	
Illustrative Games	
(9) Neverov-Kramnik, Soviet Championship 1991	72
(10) Klarenbeek-Kuijf, Dutch Championship 1992	77

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no opening variation commits as many crimes as the Noteboom Variation. In the first dozen moves Black sins in several ways -- enough it would seem to lose five games.

He begins with four or five pawn moves -- including a capture that surrenders the center. Then he develops a piece -- not a Knight, but a Bishop, in fact his "good" Bishop. No sooner than he plays ...*Bb4* does Black prepare to exchange it off for a Knight. Then, rather than bring out a Knight, he develops his Bishop on *b7*, obstructed by a pawn on *c6*. With luck, Black may castle by move 14 or 15.

And yet...it works. The Noteboom has not only successfully resisted repeated attempts at refutation. It has prospered. The deeper the analyses -- some now running to 30 moves -- the better Black's chances have become.

The move order can vary considerably. For example:

Zuger Klinger

Bern, 1991

1 *d4* *c6!*?

An invitation to the Caro-Kann (*2 e4 d5*) that White declines.

2 *Nf3* *d5*

Now the attempt to reach a good Colle with *3 e3* is well handled by *3...Bf5*.

3 *c4* *e6*



Yet another version of the move order is 3...dxc4 4 a4 e6 and then 5 Nc3 Bb4 as in Lobron-I. Sokolov, Biel 1993.

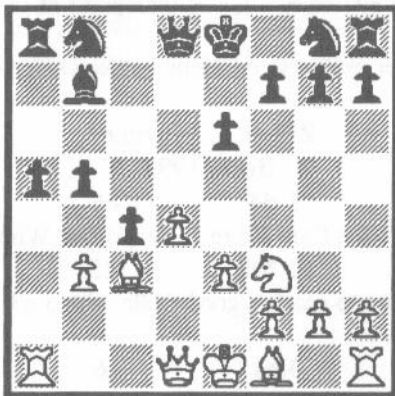
4 Nc3 dxc4
5 e3

As we'll see, 5 a4 is the standard reply, transposing into the text after 5...Bb4 6 e3 b5. A wide variety of alternatives is explored in our first chapter.

5 ... b5
6 a4 Bb4
7 Bd2 Bb7

And here 7...a5 is the usual route, followed by 8 axb5 Bxc3 as below.

8 axb5 Bxc3
9 Bxc3 cxb5
10 b3 a5



Finally we've reached a basic main line position of the Noteboom. The point of Black's seemingly mindless play is revealed by his next move.

11 bxc4 b4!
12 Bb2 Nf6

It's not until the 12th move that Black develops a Knight. He needs to establish some control of the center light squares (*e4*, *d5*) or be overrun.

13 Bd3 Nbd7
14 0-0

White has the center and the Bishops. But Black has those wonderful Queenside pawns. At first it seems those pawns cannot be adequate compensation for the positional sacrifices Black has made. But experience has shown that Black has remarkable resources.

15 Qc2 Qc7
 16 e4 e5!
 17 c5



As we'll see in Chapter Five, this is a standard Noteboom Variation position. White gets little from the breakup of his pawns via 17 dxe5 Ng4. Here he is playing for the maximum use of his Bishops and c-pawn (*Bb5* for example).

17 ... exd4
 18 Bxd4 Ng4
 19 Bb5 Nde5
 20 Nxe5 Nxe5
 21 Qb2!/? f6

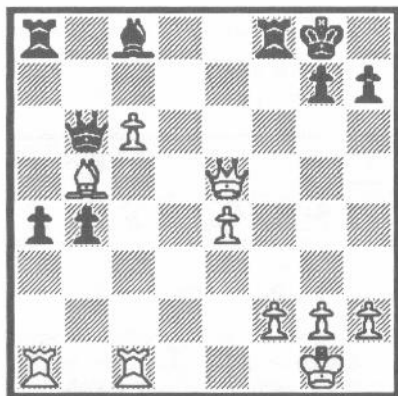
Now it appears White is getting the upper hand by pushing his c-pawn.

22 Bxe5 fxe5!
 23 c6 Bc8
 24 Rfc1 Qb6!

Taking aim at *f2*. Now 25 Ba4 may be best.

25 Qxe5 a4!
 (See next diagram)

THE NOTEBOOM VARIATION



Not the immediate 25...Qxf2ch 26 Kh1 when White threatens 27 f1. The point of the text is to ram the pawns through (26 Bxa4? Rxa4 27 xa4 Qxf2ch and mates on f1).

26 Rc5	b3
27 Bc4ch	Kh8
28 Qe7	Ba6

This clears the last tactical hurdle for Black and removes the best remaining blockader on the Queenside.

29 Bxa6	Rfe8!
30 Qd6	Qxa6
31 Rg5	b2
32 Rb1	Qc4

White Resigns

There was no longer a defense to ...a4-a3-a2 or ...Qc1ch.

The name of the opening may be another of the misnomers of opening theory. Daniel Noteboom was a talented Dutch player who died tragically young before his great talent could be realized. According to some accounts, he first saw the "Noteboom Variation" when it was played against him by an English colleague, William Winter, in a match in the late 1920's. Winter had picked it up from another English master, Gerald Abrahams, who had been using it for years. (But other sources say Noteboom had been using the line at least since 1921 and the name Noteboom Variation is entirely appropriate).

Here is one of the earliest examples of it. Note that the "Main Line" did not take decades of research as with most openings. In fact, the Main

Line virtually sprang, like Athena, from the head of Noteboom, Abrahams and their opponents.

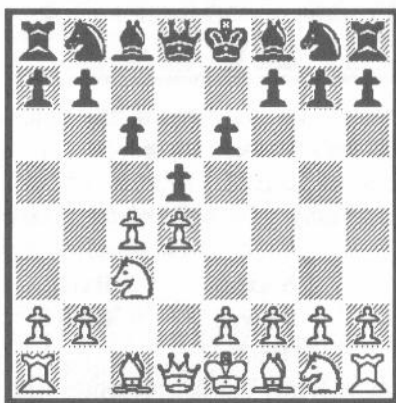
Allcock Abrahams
London University-Oxford University Match, 1925

1 d4 d5

2 c4 e6

Abrahams preferred this move order to the Slav's 2...c6.

3 Nc3 c6



4 Nf3

In answer to 4 e3, which evades the Noteboom, Abrahams liked to play 4...Nd7 and sometimes ...f7-f5.

4 ... dxc4

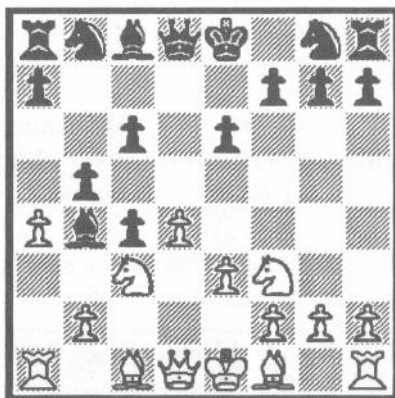
5 e3

Much later, in what he called "my most important bad game", Abrahams faced 5 e4 in the 1946 Anglo-Soviet radio match. After 5...b5 6 Be2 Nd7?! 7 0-0 Bb7 his opponent, Vyacheslav Ragozin, played 8 d5?! Nc5 9 dxc6 Bxc6 10 Nd4 Qd7 11 Nxc6 Qxc6 12 a4 Rd8 -- missing 12...b4 13 Bxc4 a6! (14 Na2 Nxe4). But he went on to win the game and became the only Briton to manage a plus score in the match.

5 ... b5

6 a4 Bb4

(See next diagram)



This was the new idea, in place of the natural 6...b4. It's value hinges, however, on Black's 7th and 11th moves.

7 Bd2

Abrahams, incidentally, thought 7 Be2 might be better.

7 ... a5!

8 axb5 Bxc3

9 Bxc3 cxb5

10 b3!

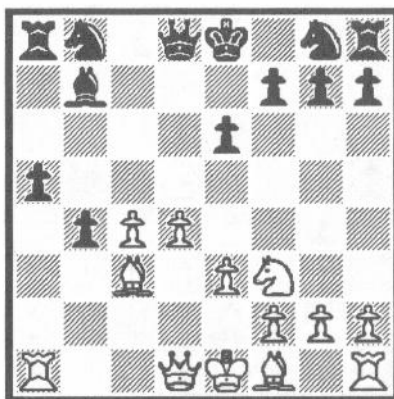
This is the reason White did not recapture with the pawn at move nine. Now 10...cxb3 11 Bxb5ch destroys the Queenside that Black has paid dearly to build.

10 ... Bb7

11 bxc4 b4

Black obtains two passed Queenside pawns -- and a lot of Queenside space as well.

(See next diagram)

**12 Bd2?!**

The Bishop should retreat to *b2*. Another early Abrahams game went 12 Bb2 Nf6 13 Bd3 Ne4 14 Qc2 f5 15 0-0 Nd7 16 Ne5 Nxe5 17 dxe5 0-0 and Black won soon after 18 Rad1 Qh4 19 g3 Ng5! -- because of 20 gxh4 Nh3 mate. The game actually ended with 20 f3 Bxf3!.

Still another early game of his varied with 14 0-0 0-0 15 Qc2 f5 16 Ra2 and now 16...Nd7 17 Nd2? Qh4 18 f3 (again *18 g3 Ng5!*) 18...Ng5 19 Rfa1 Rf6 20 Qd1 Rh6 21 Nf1 Bxf3! and wins.

12 ... Nf6

13 Bd3 Ne4

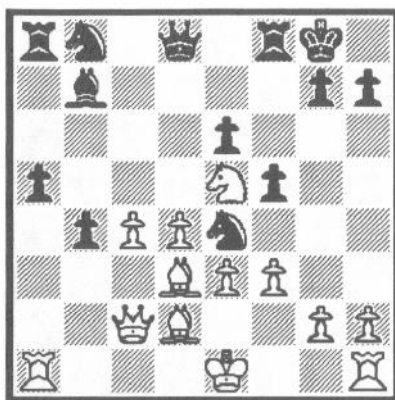
Abrahams was particularly fond of this maneuver, and later theoreticians championed 13...Be4. But both ideas have been jettisoned by the opening experts in the last 20 years in favor of ...Nbd7 and ...Qc7.

14 Qc2 f5

15 Ne5 0-0

16 f3?

(See next diagram)



A careless oversight. After the natural 16 0-0 Nd7, however, Black ousts the Knight from *e5* and obtains good chances.

16 ... Qh4ch

And Black won quickly. Not great chess, of course, but indicative of Black's tactical resources.

We'll consider the Noteboom Variation in this order:

Chapter One: White Experiments at Move Five

Chapter Two: White Restrains with 5 a4

Chapter Three: Main Line -- White Varies at Move Eight

Chapter Four: Main Line with 11 d5

Chapter Five: Main Line with 11 bxc4

CHAPTER ONE

White Experiments at Move Five

1 d4	d5
2 c4	c6
3 Nf3	e6

As noted elsewhere, against 3 Nc3, this sequence by Black allows the highly complex Marshall Gambit (*3 Nc3 e6 4 e4!? dxe4 5 Nxe4 Bb4ch 6 Bd2 Qxd4 7 Bxb4 Qxe4ch*).

Recent analysis has suggested Black is doing quite well following 8 Ne2 Na6. For example, 9 Bf8! Nc7 10 Bxg7 Rg8 11 Bf6 Rg6, e.g. 12 Qd4 Qxd4 13 Bxd4 c5 14 Bc3 Nb4 15 Kd2 e5! 16 Bxe5 Nec6 and ...*0-0-0ch* as in Tunik-Sveschnikov, St. Petersburg 1994.

Note also that White has a solid developing alternative in the form of 4 Bf4 dxc4 after which White can play 5 e3 without blocking in his dark-squared Bishop. However, the Bishop move also gives Black chances for ...*Nf6-d5* and ...*Qb6xb2*. See Illustrative Game 1.

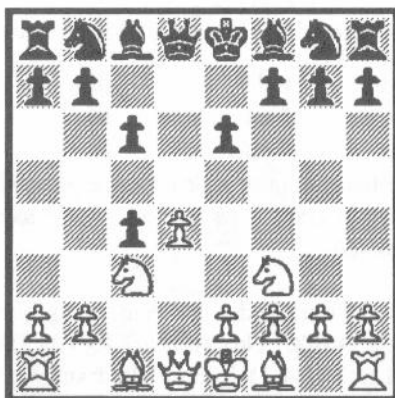
4 Nc3

White can also play 4 e3, leaving Black with some choices, including returning the game to traditional Semi-Slav positions (*4...Nf6 5 Nc3 Nbd7*) or playing into a Dutch Defense Stonewall Variation (*4...f5*).

The latter has had a clouded reputation over the years -- but that is primarily due to White's successes against it with a Kingside fianchetto. Once White has committed himself otherwise -- with 4 e3, for instance -- the Stonewall is such a good idea that many players will go out of their way to avoid it. This helps explain the popularity of 4 Nc3.

4 ...	dxc4
-------	------

(See next diagram)



Now $5 a4$, as we'll see, is clearly the main line. However, it leads to such a well-analyzed position that many players holding the White pieces in the diagram will begin thinking of how to avoid the 15-move deep main line.

White has two main alternatives, both involving the e-pawn, and a third option with his $f3$ -Knight, as well as deployments of Bishops at $g5$ and $g2$. We'll start with the Knight idea.

(a) $5 Ne5$

$5 Ne5$

A natural move, underlining White's lead in development and also seeking to regain the $c4$ -pawn.

$5 \dots$ $b5$

There would be some logic to $5 \dots c5$, now that White's Knight no longer defends $d4$. But that would also play into White's hands -- $6 d5!$ $exd5$ $7 Qxd5!$

Following $7 \dots Qxd5$ $8 Nxd5$ $Na6$ $9 e4$ White has a nice initiative developing ($9 \dots Bd6$ $10 Nxc4$ $Bb8$ $11 Be3$ $Ne7$ $12 Nc3$ and $13 0-0-0$ as in Korchnoi-Preissmann, Swiss League 1991.

$6 a4$

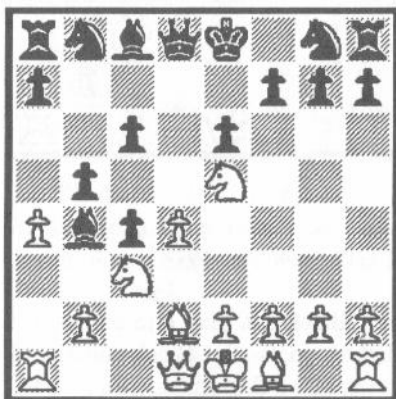
This is a universal response to $\dots b7-b5$ and we will be seeing it being used in several different positions by White. The alternatives leave White with good development -- but no immediate means of exploiting it. For example, $6 e4$ $Bb7$ $7 Be2$ $Nf6$ $8 Bf3$ $Nbd7$ seems more than adequate for Black.

6 ... Bb4

Another common motif in the Noteboom: despite his light-square pawn structure, he is ready to trade off the dark-squared Bishops -- to maintain the integrity of those very pawns.

7 Bd2

This appears more promising than 7 e4 Nf6, which creates a new target for Black in the center.



7 ... Bb7

This position cries out for master testing. On the analyst's board, Black appears to have a good game after 8 axb5 Bxc3 9 Bxc3 cxb5 and now 10 Qb1 a6 (not 10...Qd5 11 f3) 11 Nxc4 Nf6.

(b) 5 e3

(After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4)

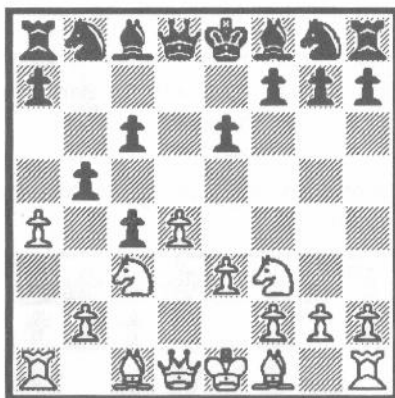
5 e3

This gives Black a choice of entering our main lines, with 5 ...b5 6 a4 Bb4, or finding a new path.

5 ... b5

6 a4

(See next diagram)



6 ... b4!?

Much better than 6...Qb6 7 axb5 cxb5 8 Ne5! as was shown by Marshall-Rubinstein, Bad Kissingen 1928.

As noted earlier, Black can play into our main lines with 6...Bb4 -- and in fact, many masters do so. But Black can also follow long-forgotten analysis which also gives him a fine game, with 6...b4.

7 Ne4

In comparable Slav Defense positions, with ...Nf6 inserted, this move is not possible and White must be content with Na2. Here 7 Na2 Ba6 is no improvement over the main line (8 Qc2? b3).

7 ... Ba6

8 Qc2

It's not just that White wants to regain his pawn. He would also like to be able to use c4 and d3 for his minor pieces.

8 ... Qd5

Another common idea in the Noteboom. The Queen is not easily driven off this excellent square.

(See next diagram)



9 Ned2!

The only good move to avoid disadvantage. After 9 Be2 b3 10 Qb1 Nf6 Black is clearly better. For example, 11 Nxf6ch gxf6 (12 0-0 c3!) or 11 Nc3 Bb4 12 Bd2 Bxc3 and 13...Ne4.

9 ... c3

It was time to jettison this lost pawn -- and liquidate the Queenside favorably in the process.

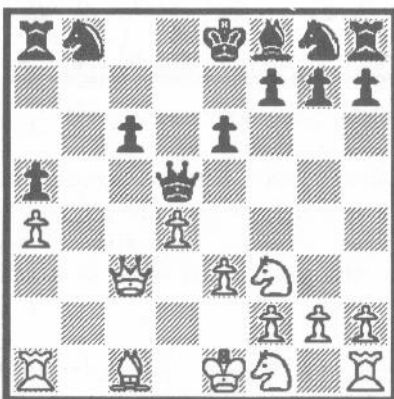
10 bxc3 bxc3

11 Qxc3

Of course, not 11 Bxa6 because 11...cxd2 comes with check.

11 ... Bxf1

12 Nxf1 a5



Black threatens 13...Bb4 and thereby solves his remaining Queenside problems (13 N1d2 Bb4 followed by ...Nf6, ...0-0 and ...c6-c5).

We are following vintage analysis which hasn't changed much in 40 years. After 13 Ba3! Bxa3 14 Qxa3 Na6! 15 Ng3 Nb4 chances are in balance.

(c) 5 e4

(After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4)

5 e4

More vigorous than 5 e3, this move has earned a dubious -- and undeserved -- reputation. White does create a problem for himself on e4 but he also gets a much livelier initiative than after 5 e3.

5 ...

b5



Black cannot claim equality if he allows 6 Bxc4.

Now 6 Be2 used to be seen, with consequences such as 6...Bb4 7 0-0 Nf6 8 e5 Nd5 9 Ne4 and then 9...h6 10 Bd2 Be7 11 a4 Nd7 12 b3 (Furman-Novotelnov, USSR 1951). But Black's sixth and tenth moves look suspicious and he can improve with more useful ideas such as 6...Bb7 and ...Nd7 before ...Ngf6.

6 e5

This can transpose into another Slav Variation, the gambit line that the great Alexander Tolush and Yefim Geller brought into fashion in the 1950's by way of 3...Nf6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 e4 b5 6 e5. The primary difference

between the Tolush Gambit and this position is that there is no Black Knight under attack on *f6* now.

The quieter lines such as 6 *g3* allow Black to consolidate his Queenside without much trouble. For instance, 6 *g3* *Nf6* 7 *Bg2* *Bb7* 8 *Ne5* *Nbd7* and Black can meet 9 *f4* with a strong 9...*c5!*. See Illustrative Game 2.

Similarly, 6 *Qc2* *Nf6* 7 *Be2* *Bb7* 8 0-0 *Nbd7* 9 *Rd1* *a6* or 7 *a4* *Qb6* 8 *Bc2* *Bb7* 9 0-0 *a6* 10 *Rd1* *Nbd7* are fine for Black (e.g. 11 *Bg5* *h6* 12 *Bh4* *Bb4* 13 *Ne5* 0-0 14 *Nxd7* *Nxd7* 15 *b3* *c5!* as in Spassky-Smyslov, Soviet championship 1960).

6 ... **Bb7**

With 6...*Ne7* Black tries to reach the normal Tolush Gambit (7 *a4* *Nd5*). Black has been doing fairly well lately in its variations, e.g. 8 *Ng5* *h6* 9 *Nge4* *b4* 10 *Nb1* *Ba6* 11 *Nbd2* *Nf4* 12 *Nxc4?* *Nxg2ch* or 12 *Qg4* *Nd3ch* (van Wely-van der Sterren, Dutch Championship 1991).

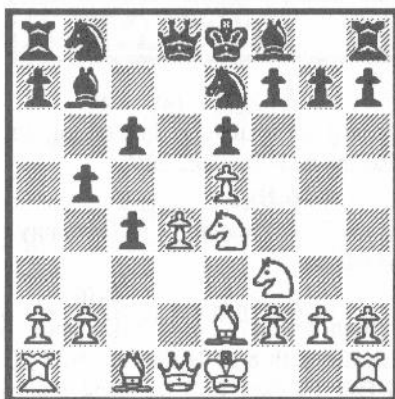
7 **Be2**

Thanks to Black's last move, 7 *a4* lacks point because of the response 7...*a6*, putting Black's Queenside house in order. White can do better with 7 *Ne4*, which stops 7...*Ne7??* because of the rude 8 *Nd6ch*. But Black can then continue 7...*Nd7*, with the idea of 8...*c5*, or even the harassing 7...*Qd5*.

7 ... **Ne7**

The Knight heads for the *d5* outpost. White can try to slow him with 8 *Bg5*, but the Bishop is misplaced after 8...*h6* 9 *Bh4* *Qb6*.

8 **Ne4**



8 ... **Nd5**

This position was tested back in the 1930's and found quite solid for Black. For example, 9 0-0 Nd7 10 Nfg5 Be7 11 f4 g6 12 f5!? occurred in the Spielmann-Eliskases match of 1932.

Matters turned quickly in Black's favor after 12...exf5! 13 e6 fxe6 14 Nxe6 Qb6 15 a4 fxe4! 16 a5 Qa6 17 Qc2 N7f6!.

(d) 5 g3

(After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4)

5 g3

Since White often offers his c-pawn in the Catalan Opening -- and it often turns out to be sound -- it's surprising that this move isn't seen much. Black is more or less goaded into a defensive Catalan line.



5 ...

b5

Since White is not immediately threatening to gain the c4-pawn back, Black might also try 5...Nf6 6 Bg2 Bb4.

6 Bg2

From here on, Ne5 -- threatening to favorably regain the pawn -- becomes a concern for Black.

6 ...

Nf6

This is better than 6...Bb7 7 0-0 Nd7 since White then obtains excellent play in the center with 8 e4 Ngf6 9 e5 Nd5 10 Ng5, e.g. 10...Be7 11 Qh5 g6? 12 Qh6 Bf8 13 Qh3 Be7 14 Nce4 (Sunye-Petursson, Malta 1990).

7 0-0

With 7 Ne5 Bb4!? 8 a4 Nd5 9 0-0! White gets good play, e.g. 9...Nxc3 10 bxc3 Bxc3 11 Nxc6 or 9...Bxc3 10 e4! Bb4 11 exd5 cxd5 12 axb5 (Vladimirov-Polovodin, Irkutsk 1983. But Black might improve with 7...Nd5 and if 8 e4, then 8...Nxc3 and 9...Bd6.

7 ... Bb7

8 Ne5

After 8...Qb6 9 a4 White has obvious compensation for his sacrificed pawn, and after 8...Nfd7 9 Bf4 Be7 loses the pawn back to 10 Nxb5.

8 ... Nd5

9 e4 Nxc3

10 bxc3 Bd6



White has the center and the outpost Knight. But Black has a pawn and a solid position.

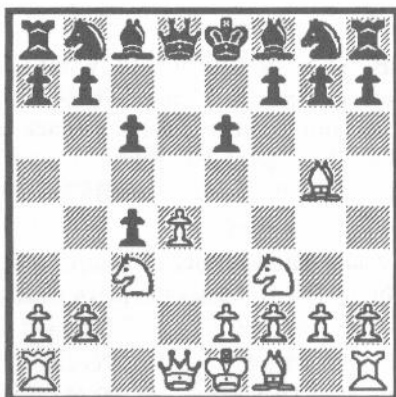
(e) 5 Bg5

(After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4)

5 Bg5

The Bishop moves attempts to lure Black into the Botvinnik Variation (5...Nf6 6 e4 b5 7 e5).

(See next diagram)



5 ... Qc7
6 a4

You will also see the immediate 6 e4 being played. Then 6...b5 7 a4 Bb4 transposes.

6 ... Bb4
7 e4 b5

Aside from the positions of the g5-Bishop and Black Queen, this is a perfectly normal setup. White can exploit the difference by meeting the inevitable ...Nf6 with Bxf6.

8 Be2

Another idea is the unpinning 8 Nd2, which threatens the b5-pawn. Then 8...a6 9 axb5 cxb5 10 Nxb5 leads to complex play following 10...axb5 11 Rxa8 Bb7 12 Ra1 Bxc4 (Bagirov-Chekhov, USSR 1982).

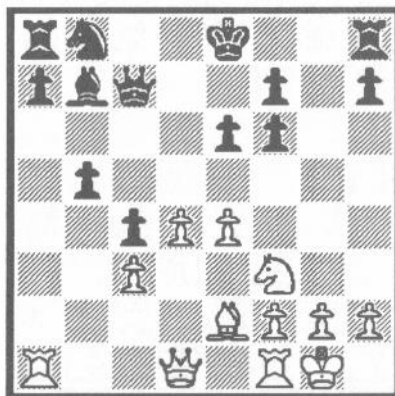
A more forthright defense is 8...Bb7 and if 9 axb5, then 9...Bxc3 10 bxc3 cxb5.

8 ... Nf6

Black accepts the challenge. A good alternative is 8...a6 and 9...Bb7.

9 Bxf6 gxf6
10 0-0 Bb7
11 axb5 Bxc3
12 bxc3 cxb5

(See next diagram)



13 d5! exd5

Not 13...e5 14 Nh4 and 15 Nf5 with a Kingside bind.

14 Nd4 a6

15 Bh5

We are following Ivanchuk-Sorokin, Sochi 1986, which showed White had promising chances. But this needs further testing. Black may have to vary, as suggested, at move 8.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(1) Murey-Sveschnikov, Moscow 1991

1 e4 e6

2 Nc3 d5

3 d4 c6

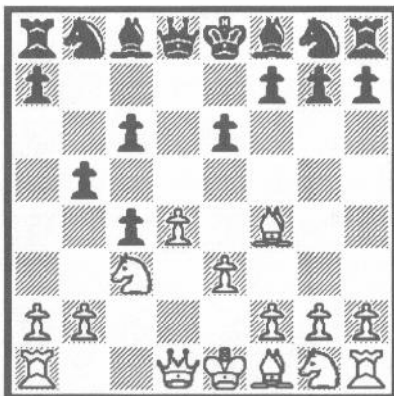
Evgeny Sveschnikov is one of many grandmasters willing to accept the 4 e4 gambit.

4 Bf4!?

dx4

5 e3 b5

(See next diagram)



If Black allows 6 Bxc4 he will have no compensation for (a) surrendering the center with ...dxc4 and (b) closing his c8-Bishop with ...e7-e6.

6 a4

Now on 6...Bb4, as in our main line in later chapters, White has the surprisingly strong 7 axb5 cxb5 8 Qf3! and if 8...Qd5 then 9 Qg3, hitting at g7 and b8. For example, 9...Ne7 10 Bxb8 Nf5 11 Qe5 Qb7 12 Bc7 f6 13 Qf4 e5 14 Bxe5 with advantage (Arkhipov-Sorensen, Gausdal 1991).

6 ... Qb6!

This is much better than 6...b4 7 Ne4 Qd5 which turns in White's favor after 8 f3 Ba6 9 Nd6ch! Bxd6 10 e4 (Korchnoi-Pinter, Reggio Emilia 1987-88).

But 7...Ba6 improves Black's chances, since 8 Qc1 can be met by 8...Qd5 9 Nd2 Nf6 10 Ngf3 c5 11 Nxc4 Nbd7 with good centralized piece play (Naumkin-Nenashev, Moscow Championship 1986).

7 Qf3?

This move had been known to be dubious for nearly a decade. Better was routine development, such as 7 Nf3.

7 ... bxa4!

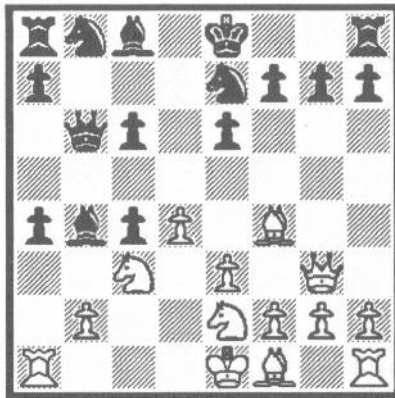
Surprising, but nevertheless strong. With the enemy King on the Kingside, his b2 becomes vulnerable.

8 Nge2 Bb4

Not 8...Qxb2?? 9 Rb1 dropping a piece.

9 Qg3 Ne7

(See next diagram)



10 e4

White is not ready for 10 Qxg7 Ng6, which prepares to trap the Queen with ...Nd7 and ...Bf8.

10 ... Nd7

11 Rxa4 c5!

The e-pawn will become the next target, after ...Bb7.

12 f3 0-0

13 Bc7 Qc6

14 Ra1 f5

This collapses White's center.

15 Qd6? fxe4

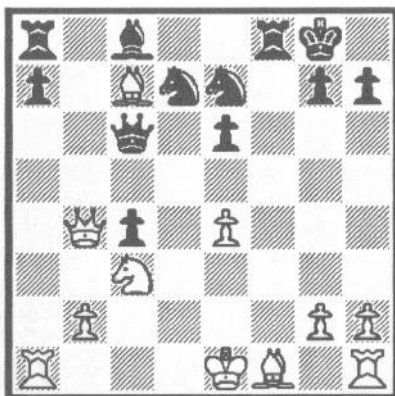
This leads to a forcing sequence that eliminates White's few developed pieces. Note that 16 Qxc6 Nxc6 would be even worse.

16 fxe4 cxd4!

17 Qxb4 dxc3

18 Nxc3

(See next diagram)



18 ... Qxc7

19 Qxe7

There was little choice, as otherwise White remains down a piece.

19 ... Qb6!

White Resigns

White disgustedly throws in the towel before the Queen invades at *f2*, *e3*, or *b2*. On 20 0-0-0 Rb8 21 Rd2 Nc5 22 Bxc4 Ba6 or 20 Nd1 Ne5 21 Be2 Bb7 his position would be very bad.

(2) Pahtz-Lukov, Halle 1987

1 d4 d5

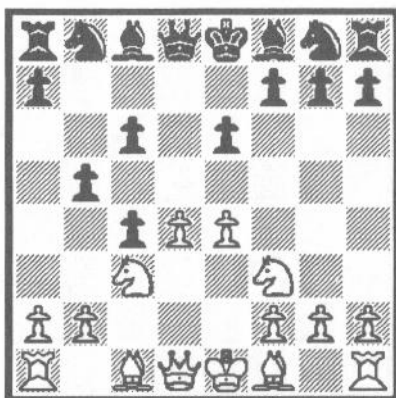
2 c4 c6

3 Nf3 e6

4 Nc3 dxc4

5 e4 b5

(See next diagram)



6 g3

Even Tigran Petrosian, in his youth, liked to offer this kind of a gambit. His game with Yuri Averbakh from the 1950 Soviet Championship went 6 Be2 Bb7 7 0-0 Nf6 8 a4 a6 9 Bg5 Nbd7 10 e5 h6 11 Bh4 g5 12 Bg3 Nd5 13 Ne4 Qb6 with mixed chances.

6 ... Nf6

7 Bg2 Bb7

8 Ne5

Similarly, 8 Qc2 Nbd7 9 0-0 offers White a good-looking position. But how he makes something out of it is unclear. After 9...Be7 10 h3 a6 11 a4 Qb6 12 Rd1 c5! we are following Spassky-Bagirov, Soviet Championship 1960, which led to a good game for Black after 13 d5 exd5 14 a5 Qc7 15 exd5 0-0 16 d6 and now 16...Bd8.

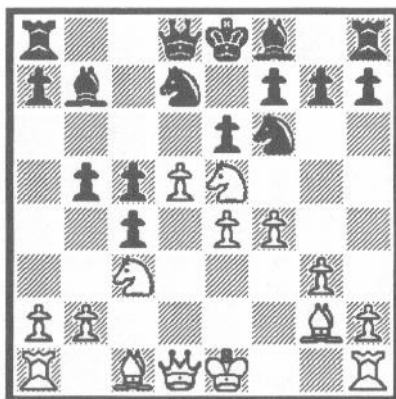
8 ... Nbd7

9 f4 c5

As usual, the best answer to *f2-f4* by White is a ...*c7-c5* response by Black. Now 10 Nxb5 Bxe4 might have been tried.

10 d5!?

(See next diagram)



10 ... b4!

11 Nb5 a6

This forces White's hand, since the *b5*-Knight is trapped.

12 dxex6 Nxe5

13 Qxd8ch Kxd8

14 fxe5 axb5

15 exf6 fxex6

The smoke clears a bit and we see a remarkable pawn structure on Black's Queenside. With his mobile King and Bishops Black soon has a major advantage.

16 0-0 gxf6

17 Rxf6 Ke7

18 Bg5 Bg7!

White has no really good discovered check (*19 Rg6ch Kf7*). He therefore allows a liquidation of pieces.

19 Rxf1 Bxf6

20 Bxf6ch Kd6

21 Rd1ch Kc6

And it is also in White's favor to trade the light-squared Bishops too.

22 e5ch Kc7

23 Bxb7 Kxb7

24 Rd7ch?

(See next diagram)



A blunder that shortens matters. After 24 Bxh8 Rxh8 25 Rd7ch Kc8
26 Rd6 Rd8 Black is better.

24 ... Kc8

25 Rd6 Re8

White resigns.

CHAPTER TWO

White Restrains With 5 a4

Since the alternatives to 5 a4 involve a more or less permanent sacrifice of a pawn, many -- in fact, the vast majority of -- 1 d4 players will avoid them in favor of the more orthodox book lines. We'll head towards the intricate main line beginning with this chapter.

1 d4	d5
2 c4	c6
3 Nf3	e6
4 Nc3	dxc4
5 a4	

By stopping the immediate ...b7-b5, White prepares to push his e-pawn and play Bxc4.

5 ...	Bb4
-------	-----



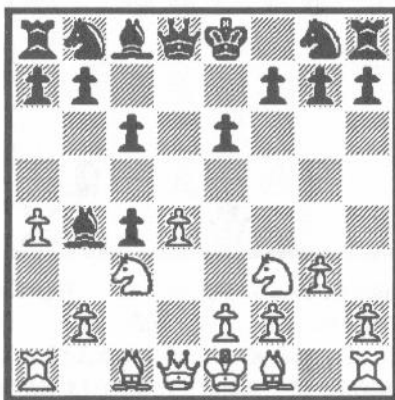
Black declares his intention to hold the Queenside fort with 6...b5, at the same time that he concentrates on control of the e4-square.

Here 6 e3 is the main line but White has such a broad choice that we must consider some alternatives first. Among them are (a) 6 g3, (b) 6 Bd2 and (c) 6 e4.

(a) 6 g3

6 g3

Yasser Seirawan has experimented with this logical method of challenging Black along the long diagonal. We now reach positions similar to those considered in Chapter One, section (d). The main difference lies with the a-pawns.



6 ... a5

This anchors the Bishop on *b4* and prevents any later expansion by White's a-pawn.

7 Ne5

Perhaps 7 Bg2 Nf6 8 0-0, as suggested by the *Informant*, is better. Then 8...0-0 9 Qc2 Nbd7 10 e4 Nb6 11 Bf4 gives White good prospects. Maybe Black needs something more energetic, such as 10...e5!? 11 dxe5 Ng4.

7 ... Nf6

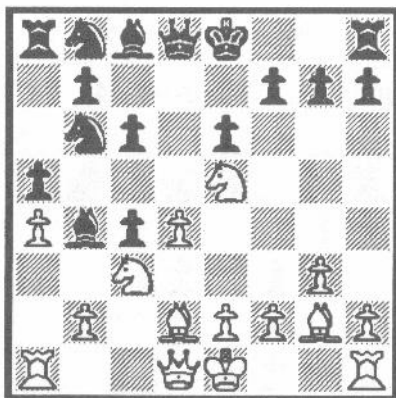
Black defends the *c4*-pawn indirectly, since 8 Nxc4 allows the 8...Qd5 fork.

8 Bg2 Nd5

This maneuver, seen in Queen's Gambit Accepted positions, hopes to block the long diagonal while allowing Black to defend his gambit pawn with ...Nb6.

9 Bd2 Nb6!?

(See next diagram)



This attacks the *d4*-pawn and creates a small problem for White if he is reluctant to repeat the position (*10 Bf4 Nd5*).

10 e3 N8d7

With ...*f7-f6* coming up, White's *e5*-Knight will no longer give him compensation for the missing pawn. This occurred in Seirawan-Korchnoi, Bad Kissingen 1981, which White was fortunate to draw. See Illustrative Game 3.

(b) 6 Bd2

(After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bb4)

6 Bd2

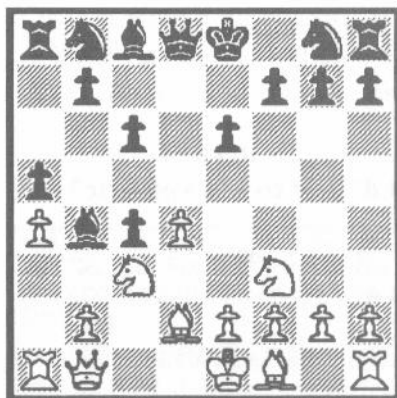
This super-modest method of dealing with the pin doesn't promise White much at all.

6 ... a5

A perfectly good alternative is *6...Nf6*.

7 Qb1

(See next diagram)



Another odd-looking move, but it has a point to it. On the more natural 7 e4 Nf6 White gets a fine game from 8 e5 Nd5 9 Nxc4. However, 7...b5 is the real intent of Black's last few moves, and he stands well after 8 axb5 Bxc3 9 Bxc3 cxb5, we'll see in the next chapter.

7 ... Nd7

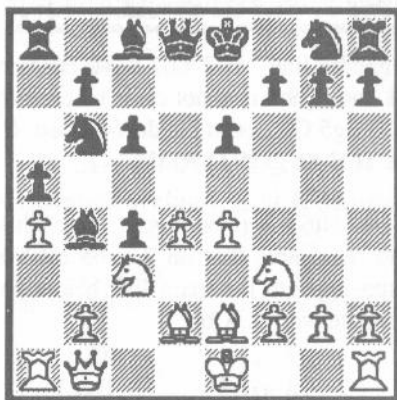
The point of 7 Qb1 is revealed in 7...b5 8 axb5 Bxc3 9 bxc3! and 9...cxb5 10 Qxb5ch. However, Black has a superior way of protecting the c4-pawn.

8 e4 Nb6

The Knight stands surprisingly well here, while White's Bishops have unambitious diagonals before them.

9 Be2

Naturally not 9 Ne5 (threatening 10 Nxc4) because of 9...Qxd4.



9 ... f5!

A suggestion of Jeroen Picket's. Black is perfectly equal (10 e5 Nd7 11 0-0 0-0 and ...Bd7-e8-h5 or 10 0-0 Nf6 11 Bg5 h6).

(c) 6 e4

(After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bb4)

6 e4

And this bears a strong resemblance to section (c) in the last chapter.

6 ... b5

Also possible is 6...Nf6 7 e5 Nd5 as in an older, gambit line of the Slav. Then Black stands well after 8 Bd2 b5 9 axb5 Bxc3 10 bxc3 cxb5 11 Ng5 Bb7.

7 Bd2



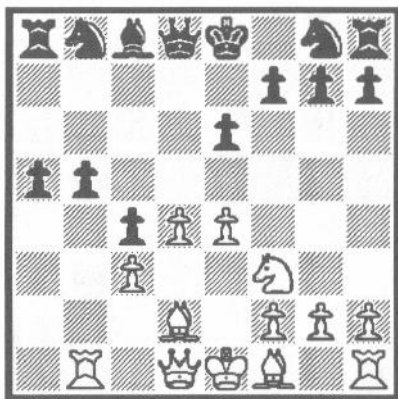
After the true gambit line 7 Be2 Bb7 8 0-0 Black can consolidate and keep his pawn with 8...a6. Then it is not clear where White's compensation lies, e.g. 9 Qc2 Nf6 10 Bg5 Qb6 as in Najdorf-Larsen, Olympiad 1966. Lev Polugaevsky suggests 11 Bxf6 gxf6 12 Rfd1.

No better is 7 Qc2 Nf6 8 Bg5 because 8...Bxc3ch 9 bxc3 Qc7 reduces White's compensation. And note that on 7 axb5 cxb5 8 Bd2 Black has a choice between transposing into the main line below with 8...Bxc3 9 bxc3 a5, or trying to consolidate with 9...Qb6.

7 ... a5
8 axb5 Bxc3
9 bxc3!?

After the 9 Bxc3 recapture that we'll see in the main line, Black's chances are no worse with 6 e4 than with 6 e3. For example, 9...cxb5 10 b3 Bb7 11 d5 Nf6. On 11 Qb1 Black has an effective answer in 11...f5! as in Illustrative Game 4.

9 ... cxb5
10 Rb1



Since ...a7-a6 is no longer possible and 10...Qb6 allows 11 Bxc4, this is an effective way of confusing Black's Queenside pieces. Black has an easier time after 10 Be2 Nf6 11 Qc2 Bb7 or 10 Ne5 Nd7.

10 ... Bd7
11 Qc2 Nf6
12 e5 Nd5

This is Haik-Barle, Athens 1971 when White obtained some play with 13 Ng5, but with ...Na6, ...Qc7 and ...b5-b4 Black's Queenside chances should be excellent counterplay.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(3) Seirawan-Korchnoi, Bad Kissingen 1981

1 c4 e6
2 Nc3 d5

Now White cannot allow 3...d4 if he wants to make any claim to opening advantage.

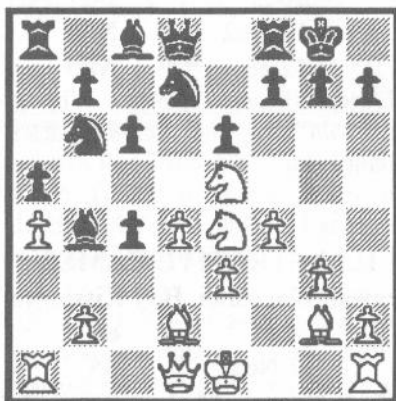
3 d4 c6
4 Nf3 dxc4
5 a4 Bb4



6 g3	a5
7 Ne5	Nf6
8 Bg2	Nd5

Afterwards, 9 Qc2 was suggested here. Then 9...Nb6 10 0-0 Qxd4 11 Bf4 looks promising, but it is not clear White has enough after 11...Qd8.

9 Bd2	Nb6
10 e3	N8d7
11 f4	0-0
12 Ne4?	



And this attempt to exploit the dark squares was properly criticized. Better is 12 Qe2, which regains the pawn after 12...f6? 13 Nxc4 and should be met by 12...Nxe5 and 13...f6.

12 ...	f6
--------	----

13 Nxd7 Qxd7
14 0-0 Nd5

The Knight has served its function on *b6* and returns to play. Its position can be reinforced by ...*f6-f5*, gaining time by attacking the Knight and taking the sting out of a later *e3-e4*.

15 g4 b6?

In fact, 15...*f5!*, before 16...*b6*, would have given Black an edge. Now White gets to swing a Rook into the Kingside action.

16 Rf3! f5
17 Nf2 Ba6



18 Rh3

It was also pointed out in the post-mortem that 18 *e4 Nf6!* is good for Black.

18 ... Rad8
19 Bxb4!

White had been avoiding this exchange because it creates a mobile mass of enemy pawns.

19 ... axb4
20 a5

But now White gets some of the counterplay he needs to stem the growth of Black's advantage.

20 ... bxa5
21 Rxa5 Bb5
22 Bxd5! cxd5

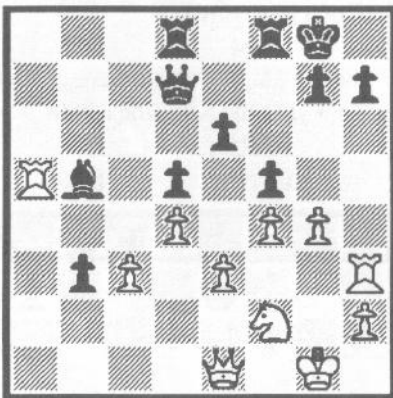
Inexact. With 22...*Qxd5* Black keeps a clear edge.

23 Qe1! c3

A common theme: Black creates a passed b-pawn and gives his Bishop some life (as opposed to 23...b3).

24 bxc3 b3

Black's best remaining chance for a win lies in this pawn.



25 Qb1 Ra8?

But this kills his chances. With 25...Bc4 Black retains excellent winning prospects.

26 Rxa8 Rxa8

27 gxf5! exf5

28 Qxb3!

Black cannot win now. His checks have only illusory strength.

28 ... Ra1ch

29 Kg2 Bf1ch

30 Kf3 Bxh3

31 Qb8ch Kf7

32 Nd3!

And in view of 33 Ne5ch Black played...

32 ... Qe8

...and offered a draw that was accepted.

(4) Lupano-Korolyov,
Leningrad Junior Championship 1954

1 d4 d5

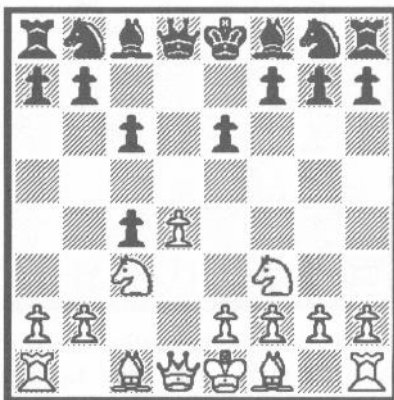
2 c4 e6

3 Nf3

c6

4 Nc3

dxc4



5 e4

"Theory recommends 5 a4 or 5 e3" is the comment in the 1974 Soviet chess yearbook. Why the position would be better for White with a pawn on e3 rather than e4 was not well understood even then.

5 ...

b5

6 a4

Bb4

7 Bd2

a5

It's hard to imagine how a classically trained player, schooled in the principles of fast development, securing the center and "Knights before Bishops" would have reacted to this. Siegbert Tarrasch must be turning over in his grave.

8 axb5

Bxc3

9 Bxc3

cxb5

10 b3

Bb7

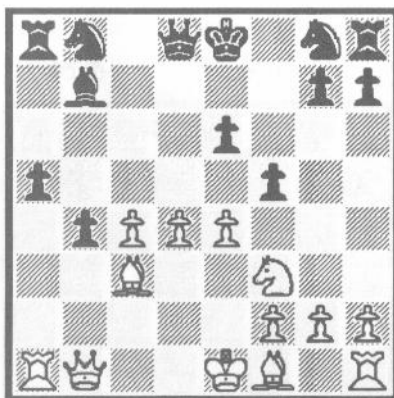
11 bxc4

b4

12 Qb1

f5!

(See next diagram)



A strong shot that makes *e4*, rather than the Queenside or Kingside, the issue to be debated in the middlegame. Now 13 *exf5?* *Bxf3* 14 *gxf3 bxc3* clearly favors Black.

13 *Bd3* *Nf6*
14 *Ng5*

Black would be happy to see 14 *d5* because the liquidation of 14...*fxe4* must favor him: 15 *Bxf6 Qxf6* 16 *Bxe4 exd5* 17 *Bxh7 Kf7* or 17 *cxd5 g6*.

14 ... *Qe7*
15 *Rxa5!?*

White bids for complications. After 15 *Bb2 h6!* his defense of *e4* collapses and he must accept a pawn-down middlegame after 16 *e5 hxg5* 17 *exf6 gxf6*.

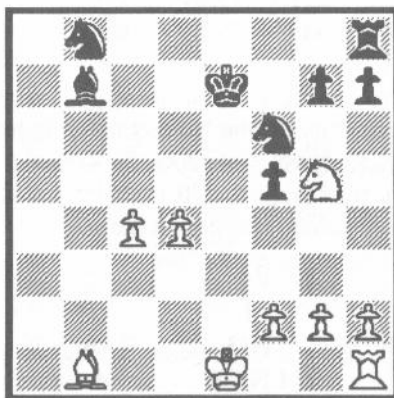
15 ... *Rxa5*
16 *Bxb4*

Now 16...*Qc7* 17 *Nxe6* may give White the way out of this mess he needs.

16 ... *Ra1!*

Countershot! Here 17 *Qxa1 Qxb4ch* leaves White a piece down.

17 *Bxe7* *Rxb1ch*
18 *Bxb1* *Kxe7*
19 *exf5* *exf5*
(See next diagram)



20 0-0

The dust settles and we see that White has two pawns -- and some positional pluses -- in return for his piece (20...g6 21 Re1ch Kd7 22 Bc2 and Ba4ch or 22 Ne6). Black's next move clears f6 for his King and begins an effective consolidation.

20 ...	Ne8
21 d5	Na6
22 Ne6	g6
23 Ba2	Nf6
24 Re1	Kd6

Black's superiority is now clear and he finishes off neatly.

25 Rb1	Rb8!
26 c5ch	Ke7!

Not 26...Nxc5 27 Rb6ch. After the text Black can blockade with 27 d6ch Kd7.

27 Re1	Nb4!
28 Ng5ch	Kf8
29 c6	Nxa2

White is out of bullets.

30 c7!?	Re8
31 Ne6ch	Kg8

White resigns.

CHAPTER THREE

Main Line 5 a4 -- White Varies at Move Eight

From here on in we'll be focusing on what has become an exceptionally long main line of the Noteboom Variation. Some of the key variations have been analyzed past move 25 -- and there's plenty left to explore after that. In this chapter we'll consider the main line up to and including the crucial decision at the eighth move.

1 d4	d5
2 c4	c6
3 Nf3	e6
4 Nc3	dxc4



5 a4

This is the usual way of reaching the main line although, as noted earlier, 5 e3 b5 6 a4 Bb4 also appears often in current practice.

5 ...	Bb4
6 e3	b5

Now Savielly Tartakower's suggestion of 7 Ne5 doesn't generate enough play after 7...Bb7, e.g. 8 Qf3 Qf6. White seems to obtain better pressure on the center and Queenside by breaking the pin on his c3-Knight.

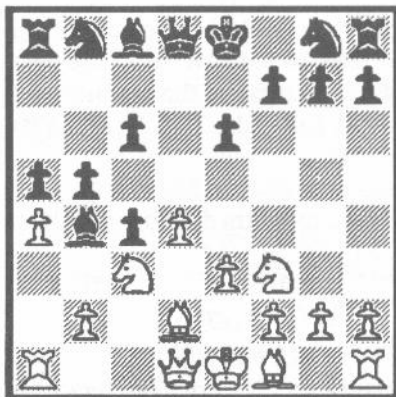
Besides the main line's 7 Bd2, White can also try 7 Nd2. Then on 7...Nf6 or other normal developing moves (...Bb7) White can play 8 axb5 Bxc3 9 bxc3 cxb5 10 Ba3 with good pressure. Black can improve, however, with 7...Qa5, since White's a-pawn is now pinned.

7 Bd2

The standard reply. White breaks the pin, and again threatens 8 axb5.

7 ...

a5



Here 8 axb5 is the standard reply, forcing a change in the pawn structure that favors Black, but creating tactical opportunities for White. Before we turn to this main line in the next two chapters, we'll consider White's alternatives. They include (a) 8 Ne5 and (b) 8 Qc2.

(a) 8 Ne5

8 Ne5

White is not giving up on *axb5* when he plays this. He's just looking for a better opportunity to initiate the resolution of the Queenside. Here he threatens 9 Qf3 Nf6 (or 8...Qf6) 10 axb5, for example.

Also note that on 8...Bb7, which stops that idea, White gains an edge with 9 axb5 Bxc3 10 Bxc3 cxb5 because of 11 Rb1!, which threatens both 11 Rxb5 and a capture on *c4*, e.g. 11...Qd5 12 Qg4 Kf8 13 e4! with advantage (Chepukaitis-Yuneyev, Leningrad 1980).

8 ...

Nf6

8...Nd7 fails to 9 Nxc6.

9 axb5

On 9 Qf3 Black can reply 9...Bxc3 and 10...Qd5. For instance, 9...Bxc3 10 bxc3 Qd5 11 Qg3 0-0 and now, despite being pushed back by 12 f3 Ne8 13 e4 Qd8 14 Be2 Black stands at least equal.

Then, for example, can come 14...f6 15 Ng4 Nd7 16 0-0 Nb6 (Panczyk-Villela, Polanica Zdroj 1982) or 16 Rb1 Ba6 17 Ne3 (Pahtz-Flear, Mandorf 1991) 17...Nb6.

A better try for White is 14 Rb1 and now 14...f6? 15 Nxc4 turns out well for him after 15...bxc4 16 Rxb8. White is also doing well after 15...Ba6 16 Na3 bxa4 17 Bc4 Qe7 because of the sacrifice 18 Rxb8 Rxb8 19 Qxb8 Qxa3 20 Bxa6! Qa1ch 21 Kf2 Qxh1 22 Bc4! with a strong attack (Hergott-Klovsky, New York 1994).

But 14...Ba6 needs to be tried (and 14...Nd6 15 Bh6 Qf6? 16 Bg5 needs to be avoided).

9 ... **Bxc3**
 10 **Bxc3** **cxb5**
 11 **b3!**

This is a standard idea (11...cxb3 12 Bxb5ch) to keep Black's pawn mass under control. Again 11 Qf3 is insufficient after 11...Qd5.

11 ... **Bb7**

As we'll see, this is the common response to *b2-b3*. Black doesn't even try to hold the pawn at *c4* because it can be attacked too many ways. Instead, he exchanges the pawn for a duo of passed pawns on the a- and b-files.

12 **bxc4** **b4**

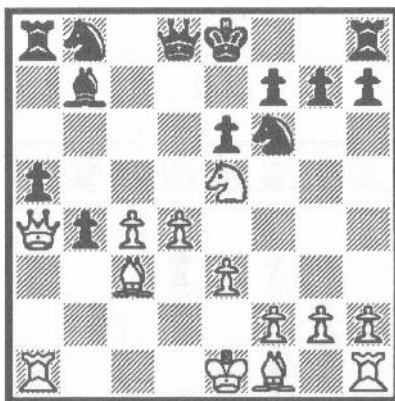
And he does it with gain of tempo.

13 **Qa4ch**

After 13 Bb2, a retreat that appears in many similar variations including our main line, Black will castle. Thanks to *Ne5*, White may then find it difficult developing his Kingside without losing the g-pawn.

The sacrificial 13 Bb2 0-0 14 Be2 Bxg2 15 Rg1 Be4 doesn't look credible (16 d5 exd5 17 Ng4 Nxg4 18 Rxg4 f6).

(See next diagram)



13 ... Nfd7!

Better than 13...Nbd7 when 14 c5 threatens a fork on c6.

14 c5

Based on 13...bxc3 14 Bb5, regaining the piece.

14 ... 0-0

White is sliding into a middlegame in which his lead in development has disappeared and he has no compensation for the enemy Queenside pawns.

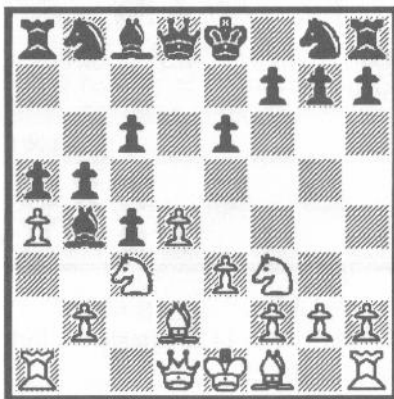
15 Nxd7 Qxd7!

This is an improvement over 15...Bc6 16 Bb5 Qxd7 17 Bxc6 Qxc6 18 Bxb4! which favored White in Piket-Kuijf, Netherlands 1986.



After the better 15...Qxd7 16 Qxd7 Nxd7 Black should have good chances in the endgame. For example, 17 Bb5 Nb8! and White has material dangling (18 Bd2 Bxg2 19 Rg1 Bc6).

(b) 8 Qc2

(After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 e6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bb4 6 e3 b5
7 Bd2 a5)

8 Qc2

On this square the Queen can both promote the advance of the e-pawn and also retake on c3 after ...Bxc3.

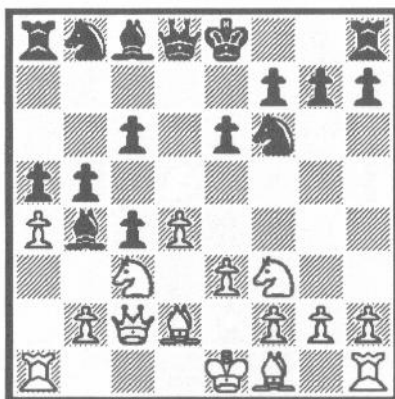
Wolfgang Uhlmann has tried the related 8 Qb1, based on the opening of the b-file. After 8 Qb1 Bb7? 9 axb5 Bxc3 10 bxc3! Black is in trouble.

Similarly, 8...Bd7 9 Be2 Ra6? 10 0-0 Nf6 11 e4 and White had a clear edge in Uhlmann-Serrer, German Championship 1991. But 8...Ba6 and ...Nf6!...Nb8-d7-b6 is an obvious improvement.

8 ... Nf6

Black can probably get an equal position with 8...Bb7 (9 axb5 Bxc3 10 Qxc3 cxb5 11 Rxa5 Rxa5 12 Qxa5 Qxa5 and 13...Nc6). But the text is more optimistic.

(See next diagram)



9 Ne5

The bid to regain the pawn fails here: 9 axb5 Bxc3 10 Qxc3 cxb5 11 Rxa5 and now 11...Nd5! embarrasses the Queen -- 12 Qa3 b4 13 Bxb4 Nxb4 14 Rxa8 Nc2ch.

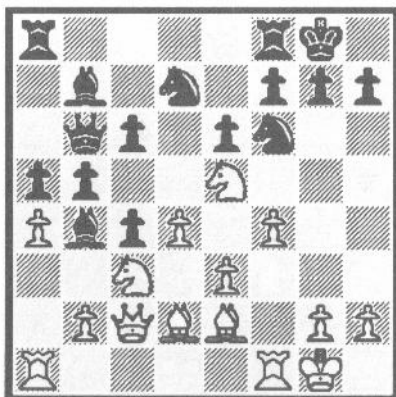
Playing the pawn-down position with 9 e4 may deserve more attention than it has so far received (9...0-0 10 e5 Nd5 11 Ne4 and now perhaps 11...h6 may be necessary to stop Neg5).

9 ... 0-0
10 Be2 Bb7

Since White is not troubling Black's development with moves like *Be2*, the second player can also vary his move order, with ...*Qb6* and then ...*Bb7*, or ...*Nbd7*.

11 0-0 Qb6
12 f4 Nbd7

(See next diagram)



White has compensation, to be sure. But Black has a pawn. White's most dangerous plan -- the attack with *Rf3-h3* -- can be thwarted, as Illustrative Game 6 shows. So the evaluation of the position may depend on personal tastes. Defenders should love a solid position like Black's, with the kind of passed Queenside pawns that should win any endgame.

Illustrative Games

(5) Pahtz-Flear, Mondorf 1991

1 d4 d5
2 c4 e6

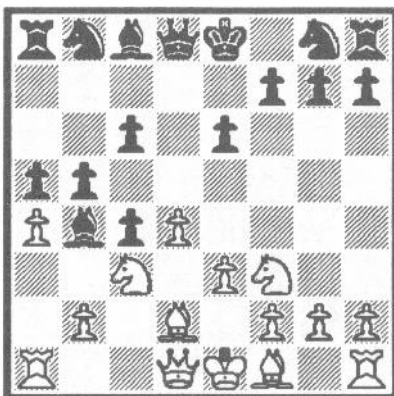
The drawback to this move order, as noted elsewhere, is that White is more likely to play 3 Nc3 than 3 Nf3 in reply. Then, if Black wants to use the Noteboom Variation, he must continue 3...c6, thereby risking the gambit line of 4 e4!? dxe4 5 Nxe4 Bb4ch 6 Bd2!.

3 Nc3 c6
4 Nf3

But you need to know a lot of theory to offer such a gambit. White declines that particular battle.

4 ... dxc4
5 e3 b5
6 a4 Bb4
7 Bd2 a5

(See next diagram)



8 Ne5 Nf6
 9 Qf3 Bxc3
 10 bxc3

An odd recapture, when 10 Bxc3 Qd5 11 axb5! would have served White adequately in the endgame after 11...cxb5 12 Rxa5. White has a super-center in mind.

10 ... Qd5
 11 Qg3 0-0
 12 f3

This idea, seen in various Slav Defense lines, is a basic method of dominating the center.

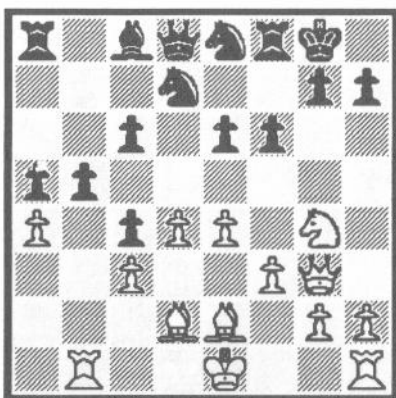
12 ... Ne8
 13 e4 Qd8

Now What? Black has been pushed back and White has a solid center. But a middlegame plan is not easy for White to form.

14 Be2 f6!
 15 Ng4 Nd7
 16 Rb1

A new move at the time. After 16 0-0 Nb6 17 f4 Nxa4 Black gets the upper hand (18 Qh4 Bd7).

(See next diagram)



16 ... Ba6
17 Ne3 Kh8

Black begins to play randomly. With 17...Nb6! he ensures an advantage.

18 Qh3 Qe7
19 0-0 Nd6
20 Bd1 Nb6?

This move, which would have been fine at any of the last three turns, fails here. Black wants to play 20...e5, but sees that this gives White the *d5* square after 21 axb5 and 22 Nd5. So he prepares -- but 20...Nf7 was better.

21 e5! fxe5
22 Bc2 Nf5

Black must block the *c2-h7* diagonal. He plans to meet 23 Nxf5 exf5 24 Bxf5 with 24...Rxf5! 25 Qxf5 exd4, with excellent compensation for the Exchange.

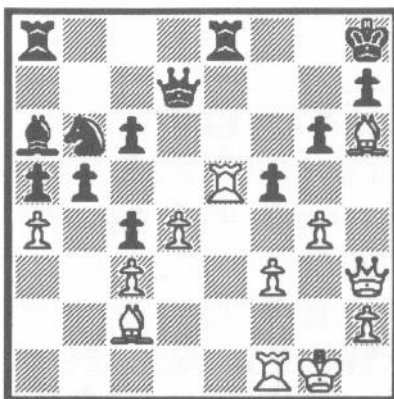
23 Nxf5 exf5
24 Rbe1!

Much better. White wins the pinned *e5*-pawn. Now 24...e4 25 fxe4 would only help White's Bishops.

24 ... g6
25 Rxe5 Qd7

Probably the losing move. After 25...Qf7 Black is still alive, since the line employed in the game -- 26 Bh6 Rfe8 27 g4 -- would then allow 27...f4!.

26 Bh6 Rfe8
27 g4!



Now 27...fxg4 28 fxg4 Rxc5 29 dxe5 Nd5 fails to 30 Bxg6! hxg6 31 e6 Qxe6 32 Be3ch and 33 and 34 Bd4 (ch).

27 ...	Nd5
28 gxf5	Nxc3
29 Qh4	g5

Black doesn't want to allow 30 Qf6ch or 30 fxc6 and saw that 30...Ne2ch 31 Kh1 Nxd4 is lost after 32 Rxe8ch and 33 Qf6ch.

30 Bxg5	Rg8
31 Kh1	Nd5
32 Rxd5!	

Eliminating the lone defender of f6.

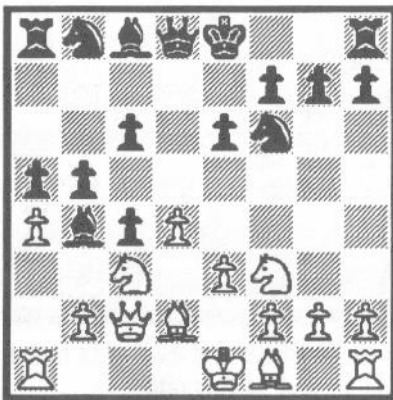
32 ...	cxd5
33 Bf6ch	Rg7
34 Rg1	Rg8
35 Rg3	Black resigns

The cute finish would have been 35...Qe8 36 Qxh7ch!! and mate with the Rook.

(6) Djurhuus-Volzhin, Oakham 1992

1 d4	d5
2 c4	c6
3 Nf3	e6
4 Nc3	dxc4
5 e3	b5
6 a4	Bb4

7 Bd2 a5
8 Qc2 Nf6



The winner awarded this last move an exclamation point in "Secrets from Russia." Black accepts the fact that his Knight will be kicked -- if White wishes -- by *e3-e4-e5*. But it is more important for Black to castle quickly and to control *d5* (and thereby prevent White's d-pawn from advancing).

9 Ne5 0-0
10 Be2 Bb7
11 0-0

It is hard to criticize White's play except for the slowness with which his attack gains speed. Now Black prepares to exchange off the outpost Knight (*10...Nbd7 11 Nxc6*).

11 ... Qb6
12 f4 Nbd7

Note that *13 Nxb5* can be met by the *zwischenzug* *13...Bxd2*, or by *13...cxb5*.

13 Rf3 Rad8

Black now threatens to blow open the center with *...c6-c5* (which he couldn't play immediately because of *14 Rh3 g6 15 Nxb5!*).

14 Rh3 Be7
15 Bf3 b4!

(See next diagram)



Black returns the extra pawn in order to make ...c6-c5 more powerful.

16 Nxc4 Qa6
17 Ne2

Two Knights were attacked. On the alternative, 17 Ne4 Nxe4 18 Bxe4 f5! Black has the edge (19 Bd3 c5 or 19 Bf3 Nf6 20 Ne5 c5).

17 ... Nb6
18 Nxb6 Qxb6
19 Be1!

White's worst minor piece heads for new vistas at h4.

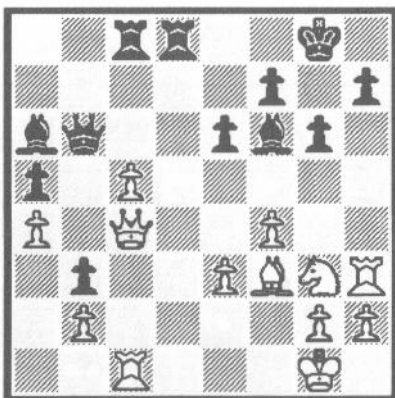
19 ... Rc8
20 Bh4 g6
21 Rc1

White still manages to discourage the c-pawn from advancing (21...c5 22 Bxf6 Bxf6 23 dxc5). As the winner pointed out, the *zwischenzug* of 22...cxd4 allows a strong 23 Bxd4.

21 ... Rfd8
22 Bxf6!? Bxf6
23 Ng3 b3!

This turns the game decisively in Black's favor. The endgame of 24 Qc5 Qxc5 25 Rxc5 is clearly poor for White following 25...Rxd4! (26 exd4 Bxd4ch). But he can still continue to defend after 26 Ne4! Rxe4 27 Bxe4 Bxb2 28 Rf3.

24 Qc4 c5!
25 dxc5 Ba6!



Finally Black's *b7* Bishop joins the game. Now 26 *Qe4 Rxc5* must favor Black because two enemy pieces (at *g3* and *h3*) play little role.

26 *cxb6* *Rxc4*

27 *Rb1* *Rc2*

28 *Bd1*

White acquiesces to the loss of his extra pawn, but pins his hopes on the future of his *b6* pawn.

28 ... *Rxb2*

29 *Rc1* *Bb7*

30 *Ne2* *Rxe2*

There were, of course, other ways to win.

31 *Bxe2* *b2*

32 *Rf1* *Be4*

By controlling the queening square Black assures himself of pocketing at least an extra piece.

33 *Rhf3* *Rb8!*

34 *R3f2* *Rxb6*

35 *Bf3* *b1(Q)*

White resigns

CHAPTER FOUR

Main Line with 8 axb5 and 11 d5

Finally we get into the extensive main line of the Noteboom Variation. Formerly the main line diverged at move 11, with one complicated offshoot leading to a White advantage after 11 d5. That opinion has been under attack for decades and now seems indefensible. This chapter explains why.

1 d4 d5
2 c4 c6



3 Nf3

Players who don't like accepting the 3 Nc3 e6 4 e4 gambit with 4...dxe4 5 Nxe4 Bb4ch might try the rare 4...Bb4. The 5 exd5 cxd5 leads to a position very reminiscent of a Panov-Botvinnik line in the Caro-Kann.

In a correspondence game, Walters-Hawers, 1991-92, White tried to force matters with 5 a3? but after 5...Bxc3ch 6 bxc3 dxe4 Black had a much better version of the gambit than usual (7 Qc2 Qa5 8 Bf4 Ne7 9 Ne2 c5).

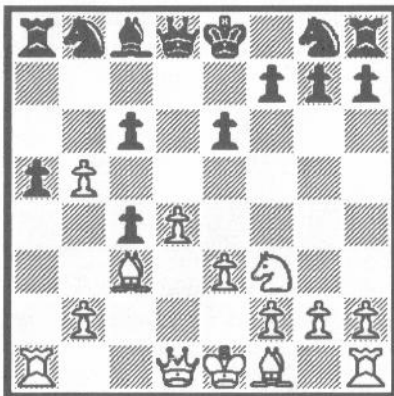
3 ... e6
4 Nc3 dxc4
5 a4 Bb4
6 e3 b5
7 Bd2 a5

On the seemingly more cautious 7...a6 Black does not have a good continuation following 8 axb5 Bxc3 9 Bxc3 cxb5 10 b3!.

8 axb5 Bxc3

Clearly forced on Black's part: he cannot allow 8...cxb5 9 Nxb5, which leaves him with two weak Queenside pawns and a deficit in development.

9 Bxc3



With this White decides he would rather have his Bishop remain active than build a pawn center. The alternative is 9 bxc3 cxb5 and now to gain compensation for his pawn he must try something like 10 Qb1 Ba6 11 Be2 Nc6 12 0-0 Nf6 13 e4 (Boleslavsky-Randvjir, USSR 1955). Black should obtain at least equal play after he castles and plays ...Qc7 and ...Rfb8 in preparation for ...b5-b4.

9 ... cxb5

10 b3

This is the move that breaks Black's burgeoning Queenside phalanx. Note that the immediate 10 d5? allows Black to defend the attack on g7 with 10...Nf6 before White can support his d-pawn.

Then 11 dx6 Qxd1ch 12 Kxd1 Bxe6 is fine for Black. (13 Nd4 Bd7 14 Rxa5 Rxa5 15 Bxa5 Nc6 16 Nxc6 Bxc6 17 f3 0-0 as in Kelecevic-Preissman, Swiss Team Championship 1994. But Black can play for more with the pawn sacrifice 12...Ne4! 13 Be1 Nc6).

10 ... Bb7!

Clearly 10...cxb3 11 Bxb5ch and 10...b4? 11 Bxb4 are no good. Black would like to blockade on d5 but the immediate 10...Qd5 fails to 11 bxc4 bxc4 12 Qa4ch.

11 d5

This move was routinely given an exclamation point in the 1950's and 1960's. But the bloom is off the rose. It was given "?!" by Russian GM Mikhail Krasenkov in annotating Illustrative Game 9.

11 ... Nf6

Now 12 dxe6 Qxd1ch 13 Kxd1 allows Black to seize the initiative with 13...Ne4! 14 exf7ch Kxf7 15 Be1 Rd8ch. For example, 16 Kc1 Nc6 17 bxc4 b4! and Black's position is to be preferred.

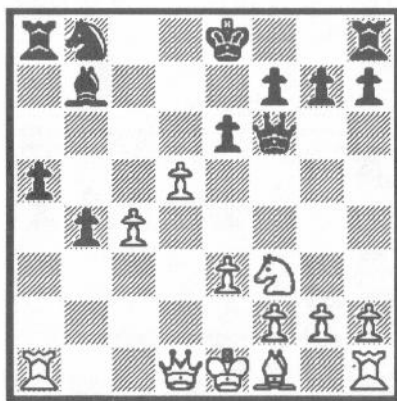
12 bxc4 b4

13 Bxf6

Here 13 Bb2 leaves Black with no problems after 13...exd5 or 13...0-0. And note that on 13 Qa4ch Black can offer a trade of Queens with 13...Qd7, under the rule of thumb that he should be better in most Noteboom endgames.

13 ... Qxf6

Had Black retaken with the g-pawn, White could sacrifice the d-pawn with 14 Nd4 or protect it with 14 e4. The text puts White to the test by keeping a1 and c3 in mind.



14 Qa4ch

Gerald Abrahams analyzed this move some 70 years ago and concluded 14...Kf8 was best, after which 15 Nd4 gives White a strong initiative. Black, however, can do much better.

14 ... Nd7!

15 Nd4

The only attractive way of continuing the attack. After 15 Rd1 Qc3ch or 15 e4 Qc3ch 16 Nd2 0-0! and ...Nc5 (17 Qxd7?? Qxa1ch) Black has an easy time.

15 ... e5

Black's intent is to consolidate eventually with ...Nc5 and start pushing his pawns. Note that White's 13th move has left him significantly weakened on the dark squares.

16 Nb3 Ke7

Black must extricate himself from the a4-d7 pin. Now 17 Nxa5 Qb6 leaves White's pieces stretched too far.

17 Qb5

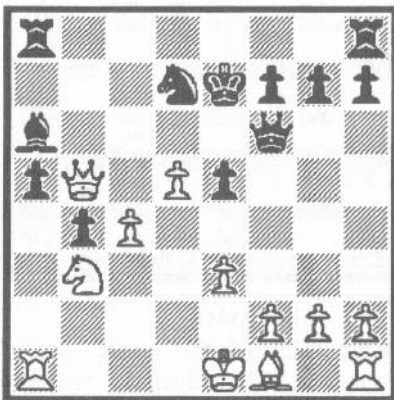
Alternatives such as 17 Rd1 and 17 Be2 are too slow, e.g. 17 Be2 Qd6! as in Illustrative Game 8.

The Rook move threatens to push the d-pawn, but Black can answer this with 17...Qb6 18 d6ch Kd8 and unravel his pieces with ...Bc6 and ...a5-a4. Other quiet responses can be handled by either 17...Qd6 or 17...Rhc8, e.g. 18 Nxa5 Rc5 19 Qxb4 Qb6 with an even endgame.

17 ... Ba6!

If he wants, Black can probably get at least equality with 17...Rhb8 and then 18 Rxa5 e4! because of 19 Nd4 b3! or 19 Qxb4ch Ke8 20 Nd4 Ba6 and the heavy pieces invade.

But Black has reason to force matters along.



18 Qxa5 Rhb8

19 d6ch Ke8!

Improving over 19...Qxd6 20 c5 Qe6 21 Bxa6 Qxb3 which was found insufficient after Kaunus-Mikenas, Plunge 1982, went 22 0-0 Qe6 23 Qc7! with a push of the c-pawn coming up.

20 Qd5

Clearly insufficient is 20 c5 Bb7! or 20 Qc7 e4 21 Nd4 b3, with advantage for Black in either case. And for 20 Be2 Bb7 see Illustrative Game 7.

20 ... Bb7

21 Qd2

After 21 Qd1 White can retake on a1 with his Queen. But 21...Rxa1 22 Qxa1 Qxd6 leaves him with no compensation for his lack of Kingside development (23 Be2 Ra8).

21 ... Rxa1ch

22 Nxa1

Now 22...Bc6 is good enough and led to victory in Taylor-Hergott, Toronto 1987 after 23 Nb3 Ba4 24 Qa2 Bxb3 and 25...Nc5. But Black may do even better.

22 ... Nc5



Black has a powerful game, as indicated by 23 Qxb4 Qxd6 and Black wins with his threats of 24...Nd3ch and Bishop discoveries (24 Qd2 Qa6!).

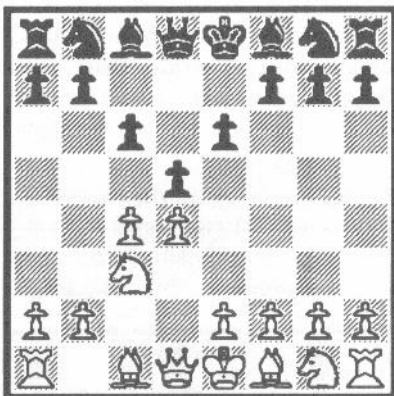
After 23 d7ch Black should be careful (23...Nxd7 24 Qxb4).

But after 23...Kd8 he is high and dry: 24 Qxb4 Qd6 25 Qd2 Qa6 and now Serebrjanik-Maximenko, Vrnjacka Banja 1991, ended abruptly -- 26 Qb2 Qa5ch and White resigns in view of 27 Ke2 Bf3ch. No better was 26 Nc2 Be4 and wins.

Illustrative Games

(7) Ionov-Moroz, Tallin 1984

1 d4	d5
2 c4	c6
3 Nc3	e6



4 Nf3

Probably more testing of the Marshall Gambit (4 e4) has occurred in the former Soviet Union in the past 15 years than at any time anywhere before. That White avoids it so often these days is one indication of the doubts about its soundness.

4 ...	dx c4
5 a4	Bb4
6 e3	b5
7 Bd2	a5
8 axb5	Bxc3
9 Bxc3	cx b5
10 b3	Bb7

A very deceptive position -- particularly if you are handing the White pieces for the first time. Then it would seem natural to play White's next move.

11 d5	Nf6
12 bxc4	b4
13 Bxf6	Qxf6
14 Qa4ch	Nd7
15 Nd4	e5

16 Nb3

Ke7



17 Qb5

Ba6

18 Qxa5

Rhb8

19 d6ch

White can play for a draw with 19 Qc7, and if 19...Rc8 (and not 19...Rb7 20 Qc6), then 20 Qa5, repeating the position if Black continues 20...Rcb8.

White cannot get more than a draw with 20 d6ch Qxd6 21 Qxd6ch Kxd6 22 c5ch because of 22...Nxc5 23 Nxc5 Bxf1 24 Ne4ch Kd5! as pointed out by Taimanov.

19 ...

Ke8!

20 Be2

Bb7

With the g-pawn hanging, this retreat is strong here -- while Qc7 doesn't have the power it did two moves before.

21 Qc7

Rxa1ch

22 Nxa1

Bxg2

23 Rg1

e4!

By threatening 24...Qxa1ch as well as the check on c3, Black begins a devastating final attack.

24 Nb3

Qc3ch

25 Nd2

Bf3!

26 Bd1

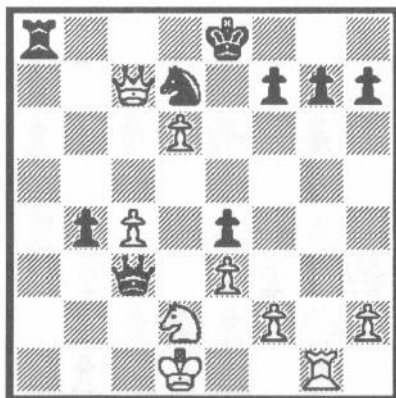
The main Black threat was ...Ra8-a1ch.

26 ...

Bxd1

27 Kxd1

Ra8



28 Nb1 Qd3ch

29 Kc1 b3

30 Na3

Hoping for 30...Rxa3?? 31 Qc8 mate.

30 ... b2ch!

White resigns

(8) Rogers-Krasenkov, Hastings 1993-94

1 d4 d5

2 c4 e6

3 Nc3 c6

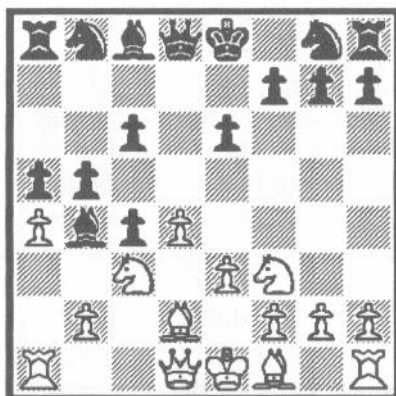
4 Nf3 dxc4

5 e3 b5

6 a4 Bb4

7 Bd2 a5

(See next diagram)



8 axb5	Bxc3
9 Bxc3	cxb5
10 b3	Bb7
11 d5	

Black recalled that he had played the Noteboom Variation "since childhood" but only remembered the antidote for this line with difficulty.

11 ...	Nf6
12 bxc4	b4
13 Bxf6	Qxf6
14 Qa4ch	Nd7
15 Nd4	e5
16 Nb3	Ke7
17 Be2	



Old analysis by Boleslavsky ran 17...Rhc8 18 0-0 Nc5 19 Nxc5 Rxc5 with equality. However, Black does better.

17 ... Qd6

Not 17...Qb6 because of 18 Bg4! -- the idea behind White's 17th move. Black has a clever point of his own in mind.

18 Bg4 Nb6!

19 c5 Qxd5

Black sacrifices the Knight for two pawns and a double attack coming up on g2.

20 cxb6 Bc6!

21 Qa2 Qxg2



Regaining material at a profit. White is soon lost.

22 Rf1 Qxg4

23 Nxa5 Bb5

24 Qb2 Qe4!

25 b7 Ra6

26 Rg1

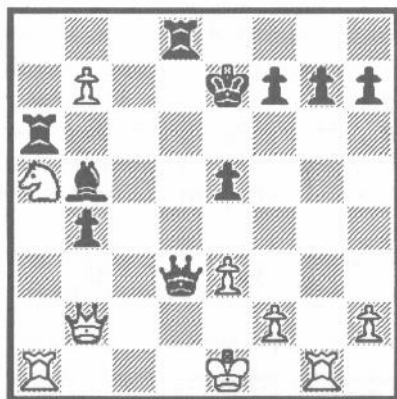
The position still contains some surprises (26...Rg6 27 0-0-0! and White is alive). But Black dispatches his opponent with:

26 ... Rd8!

27 Qc1 Qd3

28 Qb2

(See next diagram)



28 ... Kf6!

White resigns

There is no defense to 29...Rxa5 (30 Rxa5 Qd1 mate).

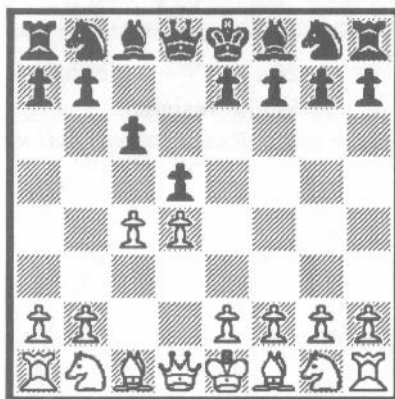
CHAPTER FIVE

Main Line with 8 axb5 and 11 bxc4

This is going to be a particularly long analysis because of the extensive research that has emerged in the last five years of the solid prospects that White appears to obtain when he develops smoothly and prepares to push his e-pawn and c-pawn. As we'll see, Black is not without resources of his own.

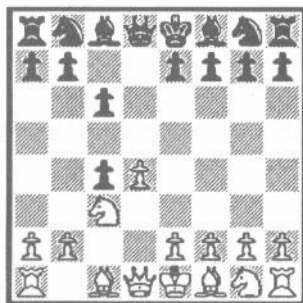
1 d4 d5
2 c4 c6

We'll sidestep 2...e6 for the purpose of considering the next note.



3 Nf3

We might call 3 Nc3 dxc4!? the Accelerated Noteboom Variation. Black ends up with a fine game after 4 a4 e5 or 4 e3 b5 (5 Nxb5 cxb5 6 Qf3 Qc7! 7 Qxa8 Bb7 8 Qxa7 e5! and Black is better.



(After 3 Nc3 dxc4)

However, 3...dxc4 is rarely played because after 4 e4 e5 White has a strong idea in 5 Bxc4! and if 5...Qxd4 then 6 Qb3.

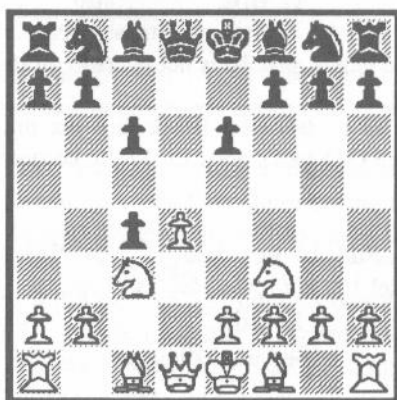
But Black has a more Noteboom-ish idea in 4...b5, after which 5 a4 b4 6 Na2! Nf6 7 e5 is known to favor White. But Black can improve with 5...e5!.

Then 6 d5? b4 and 6 dxe5 Qxd1ch are excellent for Black. And 6 axb5 exd4 must favor Black since the sacrificial 7 Bxc4 dxc3 8 Bxf7ch Ke7 9 Bg5ch is refuted by 9...Nf6.

The true test of 3 Nc3 dxc4 4 e4 b5 5 a4 e5! would be 6 Nf3 and then 6...b4 7 Nb1 exd4 8 Qxd4 Qxd4 9 Nxd4 Ba6 or 8 Bxc4 Ba6 9 Qd3 Bxc4 10 Qxc4 Nf6 (Farago-Ljubisavljevic, Aosta 1989).

In the last line White retains an endgame edge after 11 Bg5 Be7 12 Bxf6! Bxf6 13 e5 Be7 14 Nxd4 Qd5, but it is fairly small.

3 ... e6
 4 Nc3 dxc4



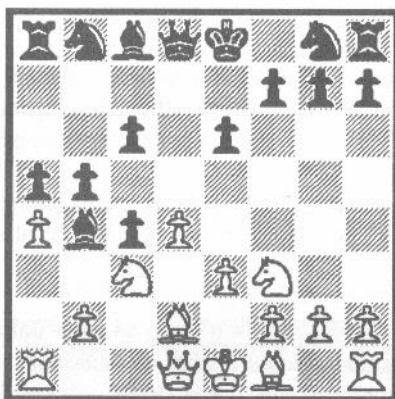
5 a4 Bb4
 6 e3 b5
 7 Bd2

Because of the conclusion to be found at the end of this chapter White may do better in the future by diverging before this move (trying something we touched on in Chapters One and Two).

After 7 Bd2 White has little choice for the next six moves.

7 ...

a5



8 axb5

Bxc3

9 Bxc3

cxb5

10 b3

Bb7

11 bxc4

b4

12 Bb2

Nf6

Now the possibility of *c4-c5* arises at almost every turn. But Black can obtain good play if he makes sure he is not overrun on the Queenside.

For example, 13 *c5* 0-0 (lest Black face the uncomfortable Bishop check) 14 *Ne5* *Qc7* 15 *Qa4* looks good for White because of his pressure on *c6* and *a5*.

However, 15...*Rd8* 16 *Rc1* *Nc6* 17 *Nc4* *Ne7* turned out well in Korchnoi-Lobron, Biel 1993 (18 *Nb6* *Ra7* 19 *f3* *Nfd5*).

13 **Bd3**

(See next diagram)



This seems so naturally strong that in the old days Black went in for odd responses, such as 13...Nfd7 and 13...Be4.

13 ... Nbd7

Gerald Abrahams' original intent when he tested this system in the early 1920's, was to occupy *e4* early on. But he found out that 13...Ne4 runs into problems after 14 Qa4ch, since 14...Nd7 15 Ne5 leaves Black's pieces scrambling to protect one another.

He later found that 13...0-0 14 0-0 Nbd7 (or 13...Nbd7 14 0-0 0-0) was better, enabling Black to effectively answer *e3-e4* with ...*e6-e5*.

Incidentally, 13...Nbd7 was given a question mark -- and 13...Be4 was regarded as the main line -- by Max Euwe during the 1960's. As late as a 1984 book Lev Polugayevsky gave the Bishop move an exclamation point.

14 Qc2

You still see 14 0-0 Qc7 15 Re1 cited in books (e.g. B.C.O.) as the key line here. After 15...0-0 16 c5 White is supposed to have the edge, e.g. 16...e5 17 Bb5! or 16...Ne4 17 Qc2 f5 18 Nd2! intending *Nxe4* or *Nc4*.

But Black does better with 16...Be4, so that he can maintain a blockade of the center after 17 Bxe4 Nxe4 18 Qc2 Qc6. And if 17 Bb5 Rfb8, e.g. 18 Ba4 Rd8 19 Nd2 Bc6 20 Qe2 Bxa4 21 Rxa4 e5 (Malaniuk-Raicevic, Kecskemet 1989).

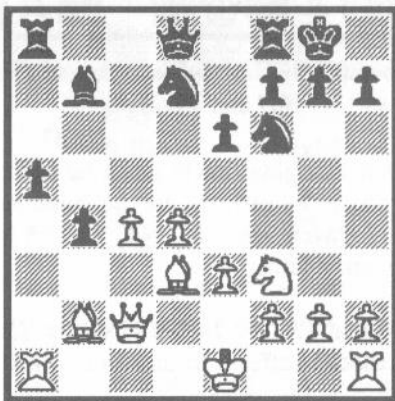
Also, on 15 Nd2 (instead of 15 Re1) White threatens to seal off Black's center chances with 16 f4!, e.g. 15...0-0 16 f4! a4 17 Rc1 followed

by $e3-e4$ with advantage. But Black should be able to equalize with the immediate $15...e5$.

14 ... 0-0

Also good is $14...Qc7$ so that he can answer $15 e4$ with $15...e5$ or $15...Qf4!$?

The temporary sacrifice of meeting $e3-e4$ with $e6-e5$ is one we'll encounter a lot in the rest of this chapter. For example, $14...Qc7$ $15 e4 e5$ $16 Nxe5 Nxe5$ $17 dxe5$ and now $17...Ng4$ $18 e6 fxe6$ $19 Qe2 h5$ (or $19...Ne5$ $20 Qh5ch Ng6$) $20 h3 Ne5$ and Black was doing well in Radomskij-Kotliar, U.S. Team Championship 1994.



15 0-0 Qc7

16 e4

This is now regarded as the crucial continuation. The discarded alternatives include:

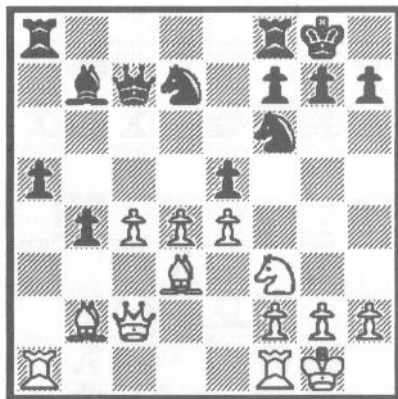
(a) $16 Rfe1$ (too quiet) $16...Rfe8$ and now $17 Ne5?$ is a bad idea because Black can favorably trade his h-pawn for control of $c5$ with $17...Nxe5!$ $18 dxe5 Nd7$ $19 Bxh7ch Kh8$. Then $20...g6$, trapping the Bishop, is threatened and $20 Bd3 Nc5$ followed by $21...a4$ gives Black the advantage (Shutler-Hergatt, British Championship 1987).

(b) The immediate $16 Ne5?$ fails in the same way -- $16...Nxe5$ $17 dxe5 Nd7$ $18 Bxh7ch Kh8$ $19 Be4 Bxe4$ $20 Qxe4 Nc5$ favors Black. If White insists on the piece sacrifice on $g6$ ($19 Rfd1 g6$ $20 Bxg6 fxg6$ $21 Qxg6$) Black should oblige him because of $21...Nc5$ $22 Bd4 Nb3$ $23 Qxe6 Qg7!$ and then $24 Qh3ch Qh7$ $25 e6 Nxd4$ according to Sosonko and Pliester.

(c) 16 c5, a recent try that prepares to make $e3-e4$ stronger, seems to be adequately handled by 16...h6 17 e4 Bc6 with the idea of ...Qb7 to hold back $d4-d5$ and make the e-pawn a target.

For example, 18 Rfb1 a4 19 Bc1? Qb7 20 Nd2?! b3 with advantage to Black, as pointed out by Grigory Serper.

16 ... e5!



Of course, Black must respond this way since 17 e5 would be devastating.

17 Rfe1

This has come back into fashion in the last few years. The alternatives include:

(a) 17 Nxe5 Nxe5 18 dxe5 and now both 18...Nd7 and 18...Ng4 will regain the pawn with a good position. For example, 18...Ng4 19 Be2 Nxe5 20 f4 Nd7 21 e5 Nc5 and despite apparent strength of the mobile White pawns, Black stood well in Sanchez-Bellon, Barcelona 1989, after 22 f5 a4 23 e6 f6 24 Bh5? Nxe6! 25 fxe6 Qc5ch and 26...Qxh5.

(b) 17 c5 can also be met safely by 17...h6, as we saw at move 16. For example, 18 dxe5 Nh5! or 18 Rfc1 Rfc8 19 dxe5 Nh5. See also Illustrative Game 10 in which the Black Knight goes to $h7$.

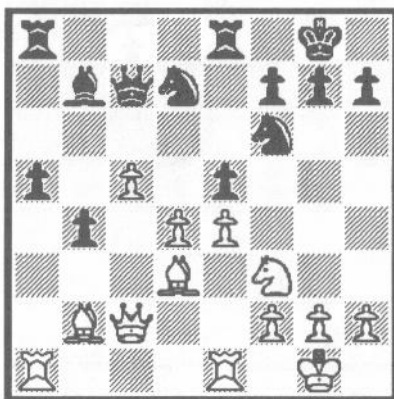
(c) 17 h3 is a waiting move that takes $g4$ away from a Black Knight. But Black again gets a perfectly good game from 17...Nh5 and 18...Nf4, e.g. 18 c5 Nf4 19 Bb5 exd4 20 Bxd4 Ba6 21 Bc4 Ne6.

Then, in Yakovich-Malyutin, Moscow 1991, Black obtained a quick edge after 22 Bxe6 fxe6 23 Rfd1 Rxf3! and 24...Rf8.

17 ... Rfe8

Black can use other good waiting moves, such as 17...h6. Then on 18 c5 he obtains a good game from 18...exd4 19 Bxd4 Rfe8 since 20 e5 Nd5 21 e6 offers White no more than equality (21...Rxe6 22 Rxe6 fxe6 23 Re1 Nf4 24 Be4 Rc8 25 g3 Nh3ch 26 Kg2 Ng5 -- van Wely-Dorfman, Brussels 1993).

18 c5



And here Black has no less than three good ways of continuing. He can exchange on *d4*, as in Illustrative Game 9, or exchange Bishops (18...Ba6).

Even at this late date Black can also afford to temporize with that useful move 18...h6, since 19 Nxe5 Nxe5 20 dxe5 Nd7 once again gives Black good play on the dark squares and c-file (21 Be4 Nxc5 22 Bd5 Rec8, etc.).

Illustrative Games

(9) Neverov-Kramnik, Soviet Championship 1991

1 d4	d5
2 c4	c6
3 Nf3	e6
4 Nc3	dx4

5 e3

b5

6 a4

Bb4

7 Bd2

a5



8 axb5

Bxc3

9 Bxc3

cxb5

10 b3

Bb7

11 bxc4

b4

12 Bb2

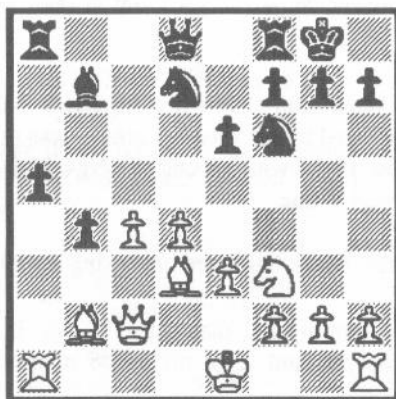
Nf6

13 Bd3

Nbd7

14 Qc2

0-0

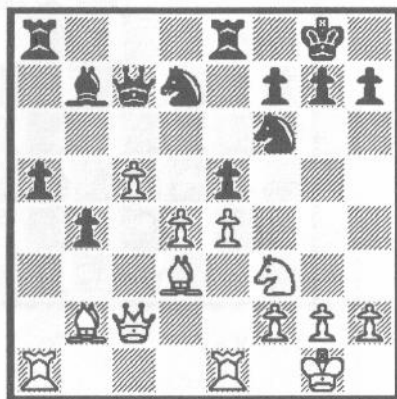


15 0-0

Another move order is 15 e4 e5! based on 16 dxex5 Nc5! or 16 d5 Re8
17 c5 Bxd5! 18 exd5 e4 or 18 c6 b3 with advantage to Black. If White

continues instead with 16 0-0, Black has 16...Qc7, transposing into the main line.

15 ...	Qc7
16 e4	e5
17 Rfe1	Rfe8
18 c5	



18 ... exd4

The English GM Flear prefers 18...Ba6 19 Bxa6 Rxa6, waiting for White to make the inevitable liquidation on *d4/e5*. After 20 Rac1 Rc6 21 dxe5 Ng4 22 Red1 Ngxe5 (Sadler-Flear, Aosta 1990) or 20 dxe5 Ng4 21 Red1 Ngxe5 22 Nxe5 Nxe5 23 Rd5 h6 and ...*Rae6* (Bellon-Flear, Bern 1992) Black's Queenside pawns give him at least as good winning chances as White.

19 Bxd4

The poor reputation of this line for Black -- and a major reason why 13...Be4 was preferred by the theoreticians -- was an old Soviet game (Kan-Simagin, Moscow 1949) which went 19...Ng4 20 Bc4 Nge5 21 Nxe5 Nxe5 22 Bd5 and favored White.

As we'll see, Black has more promising options.

19 ... h6

It's worth pointing out that here 19...Ba6 is mistake because White can exchange Bishops and seize the *a2-g8* diagonal -- 20 Bxa6 Rxa6 21 Qc4! and 22 e5.

Also bad is 19...a4 because of 20 Rxa4 Rxa4 21 Qxa4 Nxc5 22 Rc1! with a great endgame after 22...Nxa4 23 Rxc7.

**20 h3**

The most dangerous alternative, cited by "Secrets from Russia", is 20 e5 Nd5 21 e6! (not 21 Be4 Nf8 when Black is better).

That pawn sacrifice, which is always in the air after c4-c5, looks promising after 21...Rxe6 22 Rxe6 fxe6 23 Re1. But it's no longer so promising once you see 23...Nf4 24 Be4 Rc8, which favors Black, e.g. 25 Ne5 Bxe4 26 Qxe4 Nd5 as mentioned by Kramnik.

Note also in this the, the sacrificial possibility of 23 Bh7ch Kh8 24 Bxg7ch Kxg7 25 Qg6ch Kh8 26 Qxh6 turns out to be unsound after 26...Nf8 27 Bd3 Kg8.

20 ...	Bc6
21 e5	Nd5
22 e6	

Now or never. After quiet moves Black consolidates with ...Nf8 and holds the edge because of the vulnerable c5-pawn and the powerful Black pair of Queenside pawns.

22 ...	Rxe6
23 Rxe6	fxe6
24 Bh7ch	Kh8
25 Bxg7ch	

This is no more promising than in the note to White's 20th move. Kramnik pointed out afterwards that 25 Qg6 e5 or 25 Nh4 Nf8 were no better.

25 ...	Kxg7
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26 Qg6ch Kh8

27 Qxh6 Nf8!

Better than 27...Qf4, after which 28 Ng5 Qf8 29 Qh4 Qf4 30 Qh4! allows White to draw.

28 Bf5ch Nh7

29 Bxh7 Qxh7

30 Qxe6

So White ends up with three connected Kingside pawns facing the enemy's Queenside mass. Black should be winning, although he must be very careful for the next few moves.

30 ... Ne7

31 Ne5 Qg7

32 g4

Now 32...Be8 allows Black to consolidate smoothly and begin the winning advance of his pawns. The text allows a complicating combination.

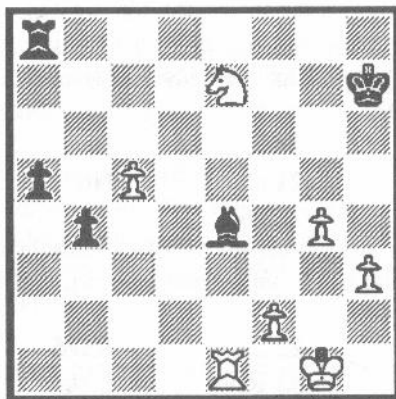
32 ... Bd5?

33 Qxe7! Qxe7

34 Ng6ch Kh7

35 Nxe7 Be4!

36 Re1?



White doesn't appreciate how quickly the pawns are running. He had to try 36 f3! and if 36...Bxf3 then 37 c6.

Black does better with 36...Bc2! but White can greatly improve his resistance with 37 Nd5 b3 38 Nc3.

36 ... a4!

And the pawns roll on to victory (37 Rxe4 a3 38 Re1 a2 39 Ra1 b3).

37 c6 a3

38 c7 b3

Even without the Bishop's support, the pawns will be hard to stop.

39 c8(Q) Rxc8

40 Nxc8 b2

White resigns

(10) Klarenbeek-Kuijf, Dutch Championship 1992

1 d4 d5

2 c4 c6

3 Nc3 e6



4 Nf3

Periodically, 4 Bf4 pops up in master practice. Black should have no difficulty after 4...dxc4 5 e3 b5, although play can become complex after 6 a4 b4 7 Nb1 Bd6, e.g. 8 Bxd6 Qxd6 9 Nd2 Ba6 10 Qg4 Kf8 11 Bxc4 Nf6 12 Qe2 Bxc4 13 Nxc4 Qd5 (Miles-Dlugy, Lloyds Bank 1982). See also Illustrative Game 1.

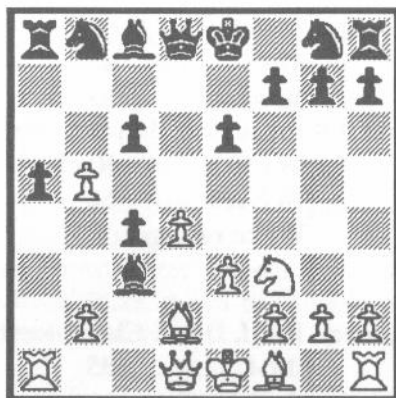
4 ... dxc4

5 a4 Bb4

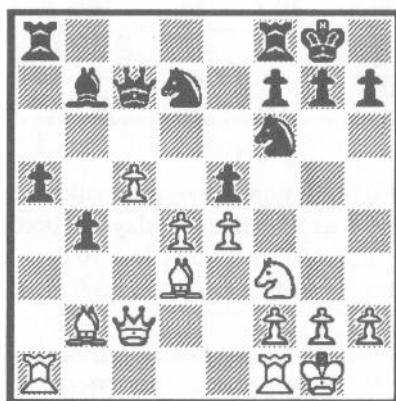
6 e3 b5

7 Bd2 a5

8 axb5 Bxc3



- | | |
|---------|------|
| 9 Bxc3 | cxb5 |
| 10 b3 | Bb7 |
| 11 bxc4 | b4 |
| 12 Bb2 | Nf6 |
| 13 Bd3 | Nbd7 |
| 14 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 15 Qc2 | Qc7 |
| 16 e4 | e5 |
| 17 c5 | |



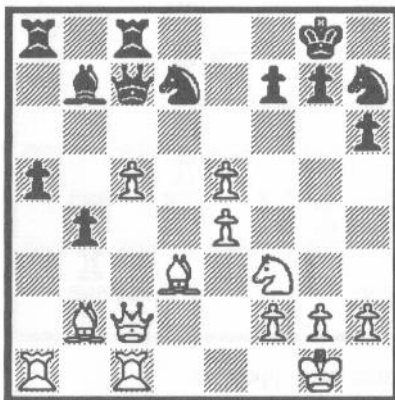
17 ... h6

Black keeps an eye on *h7* as a retreat square. There is nothing wrong with 17...*exd4* 18 *Bxd4 Ng4* as we've seen. Instead of 19 *Bc4*, with *Bd5* in

mind, White has also tried 19 Bb5 with 19...Nde5 20 Nxe5 Nxe5 21 Qb2 in mind.

After 21...f6 22 Bxe5 fxe5! Black keeps matters in a middlegame in which he has good tactical chances -- rather than a dubious endgame. One example of this is Zuger-Klinger, Bern 1991, examined in the Introduction.

18 Rfc1 Rfc8
19 dxe5 Nh7!?



The Knight is headed for the great blockade square at e6 by way of f8.

20 Bd4 Nhf8
21 Bc4 Ne6
22 Bxe6

If Black wins the c5-pawn he should hold the upper hand. Now White shifts into a Bishops-of-opposite-colors middlegame with balanced chances.

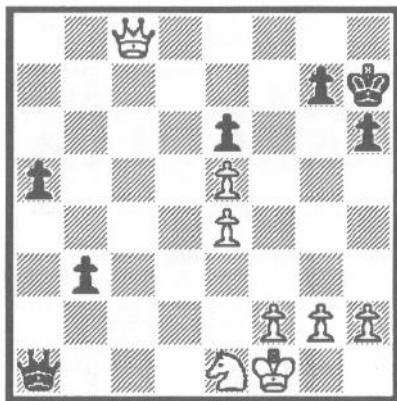
22 ... fxe6
23 Qb3 Ra6!
24 Qc4 Rc6
25 Qb5 Nxc5!

A fine liquidating stroke that forces most of the material off the board.

26 Rxc5 Rxc5
27 Bxc5 Qxc5
28 Qxb7

White has little choice, since otherwise (28 *Qxc5 Rxc5* for example) Black is clearly better.

28 ...	<i>Qc1ch</i>
29 <i>Ne1</i>	<i>Qxa1!</i>
30 <i>Qxc8ch</i>	<i>Kh7</i>
31 <i>Kf1</i>	<i>b3</i>



The pawns cannot be stopped, so...

32 *Qxe6*

Draw agreed because of the perpetual checks at *f5*, *c8* and *d7*. (32...*b2* 33 *Qf5ch Kg8* 34 *Qc8ch Kf7* 35 *Qd7ch Kg6??* 36 *Qf5 mate*).