

Scotch Opening

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4

SO 1.2

□ Polovodin

■ Rutman

Leningrad 1978

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♗f6 4.d4
♙b4

A logical move, the attack is met by a counter-attack. This is how Morphy played against Paulsen as early as 1857, and the variation has survived the ravages of time in reasonable health, as witness the fact that Adams went for it as well in 2002.

5.♗xe5

Another important possibility is 5.d5. Tal was better after 5...♗e7 6.♗xe5 d6 (6...0-0 may trouble the waters here) 7.♙b5+ c6 8.dxc6 0-0 9.♗d7 ♙xd7 10.cxd7.

5...♗xe4

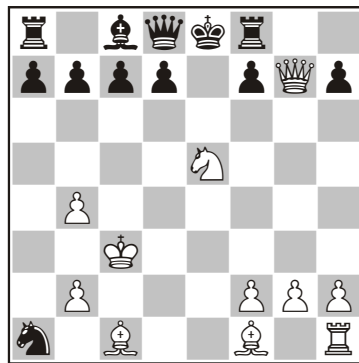
Again consistent, but there are alternatives: 5...♖e7 6.♖d3 ♗xe5 7.dxe5 ♖xe5 8.♙d2 0-0 9.0-0-0, and White has more space and is therefore better. 5...0-0 6.♖d3 ♖e8 7.♙d2 ♗xe5 8.dxe5 ♖xe5 9.0-0-0 leads to almost the same position, only with a rook on e5, which gives Black some extra tactical chances. The most solid reply is 5...♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖e7 7.♗xc6 ♖xe4+, which gives White the bishop pair and therefore guarantees him a slight advantage.

6.♖g4 ♗xc3 7.♖xg7 ♖f8 8.a3 ♗xd4

Black can still turn back with 8...♙a5. The endgame after 9.♗xc6 dxc6 10.♖e5+ ♖e7

11.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 12.♙d2 ♙f5 is clearly better for White.

9.axb4 ♗xc2+ 10.♗d2 ♗xa1 11.♗xc3



Incredibly enough, this position has occurred no fewer than 30 times in tournament practice. Personally I would be quite wary of a position in which the knight on a1 remains locked in for such a long time.

11...a5?

Now everything goes swimmingly for White. Far better is 11...♖e7 12.♙h6 (the attack with 12.♙c4? is nicely met by 12...d5! 13.♙b5+ c6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♙xc6+ ♙d7 16.♙xa8 ♖e4!, and Black takes over the attack) 12...a5 13.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 14.♙xf8 ♗xf8 15.bxa5 ♖xa5 16.♗c4, and Black is a pawn up with only few pieces left on the board. But the knight is still trapped, and I can't imagine Black surviving for long.

12.♙c4! axb4+

12...♖e7 is met strongly by 13.♚e1!: 13...d5 14.♙b5+ c6 15.♜xc6 ♜xe1+ 16.♙d2 bxc6 (after 16...♜e4 White has a venomous discovered check: 17.♜b8+! ♜d8 18.♜xf8+ ♜c7 19.♜c5+, winning) 17.♙xc6+ ♙d7 18.♙xd7+ ♜xd7 19.♙xe1, with advantage for White.

13.♙d2 d5 14.♙b5+ c6 15.♚e1 ♙e6 16.♜xc6 bxc6

16...♜d6 won't do either: 17.♚xe6+! fxe6 18.♜a5+ ♜d8 19.♜xb7+, and the black queen is lost.

17.♚xe6+ ♜d7 18.♚xc6 ♜e7 19.♙d1!

Developing his last piece, which will deal the death blow.

19...♚ab8 20.♙f4

Black resigned.

SO 2.2

□ **Hoynck van Papendrecht**

■ **Jansen**

correspondence game 1997

1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♟c6 3.♟c3 ♟f6 4.d4 exd4 5.♟d5

This double pawn sacrifice is the start of the Belgrade Gambit. This is a double-edged opening, as accepting the gambit usually leads to great chaos. If it is rejected, White wins back the pawn, after which the game gets into quieter waters. So White needs to be able to turn his hand to both set-ups.

5...♟xe4

Both 5...♙e7 6.♙f4 d6 7.♜xd4 0-0 8.♜b5 ♜xd5 9.exd5 and 5...♜b4 6.♙c4 ♜bxd5 7.exd5 ♙b4+ 8.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 9.♜xd2 d6 10.0-0 0-0 lead to a roughly equal position.

6.♙c4

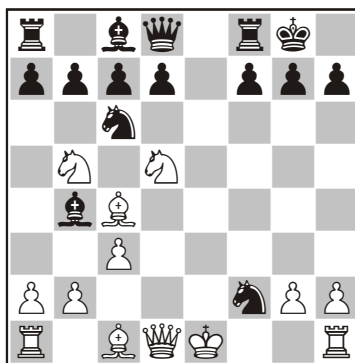
6.♜e2 has long been popular here, but after 6...f5 7.♜g5 Black has the intermediate move 7...d3! 8.cxd3 (after recapturing with the queen White is certainly not better: 8.♜xd3 ♜b4 9.♜xb4 ♙xb4+ 10.c3 ♜xg5 11.cxb4)

8...♜d4 9.♜h5+ g6 10.♜h4 c6 11.dxe4 cxd5 12.exd5 ♙g7 (12...♜c2+ at once is too early in view of 13.♜d1 ♜xa1 14.♜d4! ♚g8 15.d6 ♙xd6 16.♜xd6 ♜e7 17.♙f4, and White is much better), and in view of the check on c2, 13.♜d1 is necessary, after which Black has no problems.

6...♙e7 7.♜xd4 0-0 8.♜b5

The tactical justification of the gambit. With the double attack on c7 White wins back his pawn, after which he would have the better set-up. But Black has built up a solid lead in development.

8...♙b4+ 9.c3 ♜xf2



10.♜h5

After 10.♜xf2 ♜h4+ 11.g3 ♜xc4 12.♜bxc7 ♙c5+ 13.♙e3 ♚b8 14.♚e1 d6 Black has completed his development, and has no problems.

10...♜xh1

An important variation here is 10...♙c5, after which White can go for the surprising 11.0-0: 11...♜e5 12.♜bxc7 d6 13.♚xf2 ♙g4 14.♜g5 ♜xg5 15.♙xg5 ♜xc4 16.♜xa8 ♚xa8 17.b3 ♙xf2+ 18.♜xf2 ♜e5 19.♙e7, with equal chances.

11.cxb4 ♚e8+

Very bad is 11...♜xb4? 12.♙g5 ♚e8+ 13.♜f1 ♚e5 14.♚e1, after which Black cannot take on g5, and the white pieces can penetrate. Black resigned in Kenworthy-Van der Sterren, Ramsgate 1981.

12.♖f1 ♔e5 13.♗f3 ♖h4 14.♙f4



14...♔e4!

Magnificent; the third rook move in a row. This rook cannot be taken, of course, in view of the mate on f2. No good is 14...g5?. After 15.♙xe5 ♗xe5 (15...♗xc4+ cannot save Black either: 16.♖g1 ♗xe5 17.♗f6 ♗xd5 18.♗xc7 ♗d4+ 19.♖xh1 ♔b8? – trying to save the rook, but White wins the queen after 20.♗d8+ ♖g7 21.♗e8+ ♖f8 22.♗d6+ ♖g7 23.♗f5+) 16.♗f6 ♗f2+ 17.♗xf2 ♗xf2 18.♗bxc7 ♔b8 19.♖xf2 ♗xc4 20.♔e1 White penetrates via e8, with a very annoying pin on the eighth rank. Weak is 14...d6 15.♖g1! ♙g4 16.♗f1 ♙e6 17.♗bxc7 ♔c8 18.♙xe5 ♗xe5 19.♙b3, and White is clearly better.

15.♙d3

Gutman has investigated another spectacular option: after 15.b3 a6 16.♗bxc7 ♗d4 17.♙g3 ♗xg3+ 18.hxg3 ♗xf3 19.gxh4 ♗d2+ 20.♖f2 ♔b8 21.♙d3 it is still not clear who is better.

15...♗e5!

Forcing White to swap his strong bishop.

16.♙xe5 ♔xe5 17.♗bxc7 ♗xh2

18.♗xa8

A draw was agreed here. There follows 18...♗g3+ 19.♖f2 ♗h1+, with perpetual check. A masterpiece, you think? It certainly is, but one that was thought up by Nunn, as the players were simply following his analysis!

SO 3.2

□ Van Scheltinga

■ Cortlever

Amsterdam 1954

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 ♙b4 6.♗xc6 bxc6 7.♙d3 d5 8.e5?!

This move has virtually disappeared from practical play, but it remains a dangerous surprise weapon.

8...♗g4!

Correct. Black need not be afraid of the vulnerable position of the knight and keeps optimal piece activity.

9.♙f4

After 9.0-0 0-0 10.h3 ♗xe5 11.♙xh7+ ♖xh7 12.♗h5+ ♖g8 13.♗xe5 Black is fine thanks to his centre and his open files.

9...d4

Black takes up the gauntlet. The normal move 9...0-0? is no good in view of 10.h3 ♗xe5 11.♙xe5 ♔e8 12.f4 f6 13.♗h5 g6 14.♙xg6 hxg6 15.♗xg6+ ♖h8 16.0-0-0 fxe5 17.♗e4!, and White has a dangerous initiative.

The solid 9...f6 is the main reason that 8.e5 has sunk into oblivion; White does not have much better than 10.h3 ♗xe5 (10...fxe5 is interesting, but the position after 11.♙g3 e4 12.hxg4 exd3 13.♗xd3 is rather unclear) 11.♙xe5 fxe5 12.♗h5+ ♖f8 13.♗xe5, and Black has nothing to fear here.

10.♗f3 dxc3

Up to now, everyone has always automatically taken on c3, but 10...g5! is certainly an option. Personally, I have failed to find anything better than 11.♙g3 dxc3 12.0-0, with unclear compensation.

11.0-0-0 ♗d5

Not the only move, but a very logical one. Not to be recommended is 11...cxb2+ 12.♖b1, after which the white king is safe. 11...♗xf2 was played by a young Grischuk, but I have little faith in it.