

Preface

It is safe to assume that the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit is one of the most controversially discussed opening systems of our time. Being a 1 e4 player for most of my life I never thought about adopting the Blackmar-Diemer as White, and being a successful practitioner of the Nimzowitsch Defence always allowed me to avoid it with Black (after 1 d4 d5 2 e4 ðc6); only as I started to work on this project did I realize the tremendous momentousness of the controversy around the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit.

The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit is not a boxing jab; it is a knockout punch – and White gets to throw the first punch! Stop playing for the endgame; play to end the game! Be a winner. Play the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit!

(Rev. Tim Sawyer)

[...] the infamous and rather generous Blackmar-Diemer Gambit. I must say that I am delighted to see these moves as Black because I understand that my opening choice has been successful.

(IM Andrew Martin)

As can be seen by the two quotes above, players who set their wits to the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit can be split (except for the occasional one) into two opposite camps: Here, we have a legion of dedicated followers who wholeheartedly worship their beloved opening, sometimes even to the extent of religious proportions. And then we have the sceptics who simply cannot believe in the correctness of the many grandiose sacrificial lines that make the Blackmar-Diemer a living, breathing entity. But which side is correct? As I will try to point out in this book, the truth lies somewhere in between.

The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit in current literature

Since Emil Joseph Diemer published his (for the evolution of the Blackmar-Diemer

Gambit) groundbreaking work *Vom ersten Zug an auf Matt!* (which certainly is one of the best books I have read when it comes to chess entertainment), an enormous amount of written material advocating the Blackmar-Diemer (especially in German language) has been produced. Recent reference works (in English) include Gary Lane's *Blackmar-Diemer Gambit* and Rev. Tim Sawyer's *Keybook II*, not to mention the countless periodicals, be it the (now defunct) *Blackmar-Gemeinde*, the *Gambit Revue* or Tom Purser's magazine *BDG World*. There have also been a number of disquisitions from Black's perspective, but most of the works about the Blackmar-Diemer (from either side) have at least one serious problem...

What this book is about

When judging the quality of an opening book, one common criterion is whether the author has – or, at some point, had – the opening in his repertoire. I have never played the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit in a serious tournament game (yet), but for two reasons this might actually be an advantage. Firstly, a major problem with most (if not all) works about the Blackmar-Diemer (regardless of whether they are “for” or “against” it) can be summarized in three words: lack of objectivity. And secondly, whenever an accounted expert (such as Rev. Sawyer) writes about the Gambit, sometimes very elementary (but nevertheless important) concepts are left out; this is not because the expert is in any way sloppy, but rather that these concepts just have become too self-evident over the years. With this book, I would like to address both of these problems; and I like to think that my previous ignorance of the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit has been of great help.

What you will find in this book

Upon closer reading, you will discover that this is neither a repertoire book (which treats only a few selected lines) nor a complete guide (which incorporates every possible crossroads). First and foremost, this book is meant as a stimulus to kindle an objective debate about the Blackmar-Diemer, and to introduce the opening to players who were previously unaware of it (like me). To these ends, it provides a sound basis by presenting the elementary concepts of this opening as well as the most important old ideas and many new ideas for both sides in the most critical variations. For the larger part of interested players, the conclusions will probably be hard to accept: the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit is neither a weapon that wins by force, nor is it refuted. The only thing for sure is that it remains to this day an uncompromising opening system with chances for both sides (which is why it is still played in a tremendous amount of correspondence games); and for now I would like to invite you, dear reader, to enter the matrix...

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