

opening repertoire

the Open Games with Black

Martin Lokander

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About the Author

Martin Lokander is a young FIDE Master with two International Master norms. He has represented Sweden three times at the World Youth Chess Championships. He's an active tournament player and a regular writer for the Swedish chess magazine *Tidskrift för Schack*.

Contents

About the author	3
Bibliography	5
Foreword – Nils Grandelius	7
Introduction	9
1 The Quiet Two Knights	13
2 The Fun Two Knights	61
3 The Remaining Two Knights	111
4 The Scotch Game	142
5 The Scotch Four Knights	177
6 The Spanish Four Knights	202
7 The Remaining Four Knights	231
8 The Bishop's Game and Vienna Gambit	252
9 The King's Gambit	290
10 The Centre Game	321
11 Odds and Ends	344
Index of Variations	376
Index of Complete Games	383

Foreword

I first met Martin Lokander at the Nordic Championships in 2008, back when we were both quite young. Already Martin's love for chess and in particular the openings was very clear. Being, at least in those days, very similar myself, we got to know each other and since 2010 we've been doing quite a bit of opening work together. Having worked on and off with Martin for around five years, I'm still regularly fascinated by his endless creativity. In positions where I think that I've looked at everything, he usually comes up with moves and ideas that I would never have found even with the aid of a strong computer. A good example of this can be found in Game 24, where the move 13...♙f5 seems to breathe new air into an otherwise very boring line.

Of course, modern day chess preparation is not only about finding new ideas in cutting-edge theory. At least as important is to know the history and dig deep into forgotten or semi-forgotten lines. At the very top-level Aronian is famous for that, while in the Open Games Nigel Short also comes to mind. It has been shown again and again how well-established evaluations are based on good wins in the past, but where it is actually possible to improve the play of the losing side. Throughout this book I found a lot of references to old games that I didn't know myself, clearly indicating that Martin knows his stuff.

For example, the 10...♙e6 of Game 36 shows that we shouldn't just follow what everybody else plays nowadays, but rather look for ourselves and at the history books with fresh and critical eyes. While I don't think objectively speaking 10...♙e6 is at all better than the usual 10...c6, it poses some practical problems for the white player, likely resulting in a time advantage and some psychological initiative for Black – the kind of advantages that I myself have obtained so many times by the use of Martin's ideas.

One of the strongest assets of this book is that Martin continually looks not only for the best moves and lines, but also for the most practical ones. Here it should be mentioned that his style of play consists of always fighting for the initiative with both colours. And while I am certain that the lines suggested are objectively sound, they might not suit the driest of players. As for myself, I always enjoy a good initiative. Not only is it very unpleasant for the opponent having to solve complex and unexpected problems early on with White, but it is also simply much more fun to play aggressively as Black.

Such an approach sometimes involves some risk, as in the line 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙c4 ♘f6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 ♘g4 6 0-0 ♙e7 7 ♚e1 d6, but the good thing is that the risk is no less on White's side. Incidentally, I would personally be initially disgusted by the move 8 exd6 cxd6 here which seems to make no sense at all, but Martin never trusts the first impression and after digging a bit deeper, it's clear that the counterplay obtained by Black fully compen-

Opening Repertoire: The Open Games with Black

sates for his weakened structure.

All in all, I can warmly recommend this book for anyone interested in playing the Open Games with either colour. Even for those who don't, the sheer number of new ideas should make it an enjoyable and inspirational read.

Nils Grandelius,
Malmö, Sweden,
October 2015

Introduction

We all encounter worries and doubts about our opening repertoires. I've had them for many years, I still have them, and I know that I will have them 30 years from now. In fact, deciding which openings to play and study is an entire journey in itself and everyone has their own path to getting to a position they enjoy playing.

Most of my friends learned a solid opening in their youth, and they've kept playing it constantly ever since. My own opening journey has been much more rocky and time-consuming, but I think I've learned a great deal along it. In the course of my eight years as an ambitious junior, I've had the Ruy Lopez, the Caro-Kann, the French, the Modern, two different types of Scandinavian, the Alekhine, Owen's Defence and four different types of Sicilian as my main weapons as Black against 1 e4. Yes, they were not one-time surprise weapons; they were actually all my main weapons.

Of course, studying and playing all those openings required a lot of time and energy for preparation, but in return I've had many practical advantages over the board. I've very seldom been caught in my opponent's preparation and I've won many games due to my preparation.

In 2011, I reached a turning point when I watched Jan Gustafsson's excellent two-volume DVDs on the Marshall Attack and the Open Games. I didn't watch everything from beginning to the end, but I studied it a little here and there, and eventually I found that I enjoyed these positions much more than my Sicilian Najdorf.

Ever since, I've had 1 e4 e5 as a big part of my repertoire and even though I occasionally enjoy playing something different, it's very comforting to have something to lean on. The following game is an excellent example of how Gustafsson's video helped me.

Game 1 **H.Logdahl-M.Lokander** Stockholm 2011

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♖c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙b5

The Spanish Four Knights.

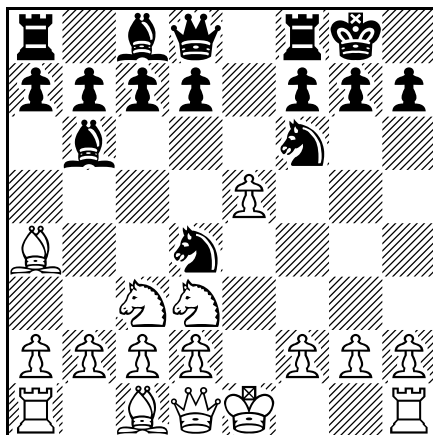
4...♗d4

Gustafsson's recommendation. As you later shall see, my recommended move is 4...♙c5.

5 ♖a4

Luckily, I was way too weak for my opponent to be interested in 5 ♘xd4 exd4 6 e5 dxc3 7 exf6 ♙xf6 8 dxc3, which is a well-known idea to reach a very drawish position.

5...♗c5! 6 ♘xe5 0-0 7 ♘d3 ♗b6 8 e5



This is all well-known theory and if I remember correctly my opponent had already played this position in the database. At this point, I sank into deep thought and after 10 minutes I played the very unusual...

8...c6!?

...with a deep sigh.

My opponent probably thought that this was some kind of unsound over-the-board inspiration. After all, 8...♗e8 is the theoretical move. Had I played 8...c6 instantly there was no way White would have dared to capture the piece, but since I spent 10 minutes 'thinking', it probably wasn't prepared. At least that's what he thought.

9 exf6?! ♗e8+ 10 ♗f1 ♙xf6

Black has great compensation for the sacrificed piece, as Gustafsson had showed in his video. White's development is gummed up and it's not easy for him to untangle.

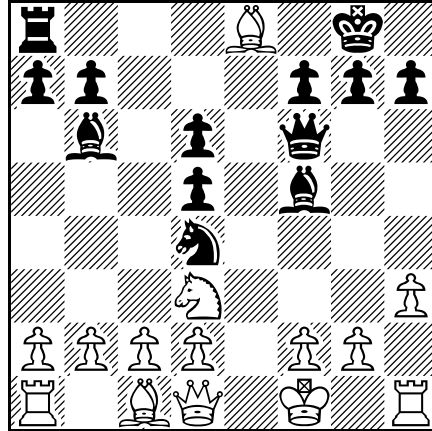
11 h3 d6

At this point I must admit that I forgot my preparation and I should have preferred 11...d5.

12 ♘d5?

This looks promising, but it quickly backfires. White should probably play 12 g3! ♗f5 13 ♘f4 when he might be able to untangle with d3.

12...cxd5 13 ♗xe8 ♗f5!



Black has sacrificed an entire rook, yet White is completely defenceless.

14 ♖a4 ♜xc2!

The key idea. Black threatens to capture d3 with mate on f2, so White is officially busted. The rest of the game isn't very interesting.

15 ♞f4 ♞d4 16 ♞f3 ♞xa4 17 b3 ♞b5+ 18 ♞g1 ♞xa1 19 ♖b2 ♞c2 20 ♞xd5 ♖g6 21 h4 ♞e8 22 h5 ♞e1+ 23 ♜h2 ♞xh1+ 24 ♜xh1 ♞f1+ 25 ♜h2 ♖xf2 26 g4 ♖g1+ 27 ♜g3 ♖h2+ 0-1

I played Logdahl again a few months later and we contested a g3 Vienna where I once again won a good game thanks to Gustafsson's DVD. The next time Logdahl played me he avoided 1 e4 altogether.

Why Should I Play 1 e4 e5?

The best thing about 1 e4 e5 is the wide variety of positions that can arise from it. Certain openings are closely related to certain structures, such as the French and the Sicilian, whereas 1 e4 e5 leads to a broad variety of structures which develops your chess as a whole.

Isn't it Risky to Play 1 e4 e5?

My first fears when I was about to start playing 1 e4 e5 was actually not the Ruy Lopez. Even though it's theoretically the most challenging choice, learning how to play against all of White's gambits and attacking ideas in the Open Games seemed like a much more daunting task.

As I eventually realized, this fear was somewhat exaggerated. I shall not lie; White has a few lines that Black needs to be aware of. However, in my experience, as long as Black has some clue about what he's doing, he'll be fine. In fact, against most tries the ambitious player can even fight for an advantage.

What's the General Theme Behind this Book?

In this book, I've tried to present a high-level repertoire for Black against the Open Games. I've tried to pick variations where Black is aggressive and quickly fights for the initiative, but I would never recommend something that in my opinion gives White an objective advantage. These are not variations one would try once or twice. The variations are aggressive, but most importantly they are strong and theoretically sound.

Another factor I've tried to include is a practical one. Whenever possible, I've tried to introduce new ideas that are at least as equally strong as the established ideas. At the beginning of this project I didn't think I would be able to discover as many new ideas as I did, but it still shows that even in today's society, where information is available within seconds, new ideas are still being developed.

What Should I Play Against the Ruy Lopez?

Covering the Ruy Lopez would require an entire book itself, and during the process of this book I've largely played 1...e5 in the hope that I wouldn't face the Ruy Lopez. There are in fact many good variations in the Ruy Lopez. I've tried a lot of them, but there are still many I haven't tried. Indeed, I've played 15 different variations of the Ruy Lopez as Black with decent results, so the choice is really yours!

Now, let's get down to business and I wish you great success with 1 e4 e5!

Martin Lokander,
Stockholm, Sweden,
October 2015

This might look like a strange decision, but it's all about making White's pieces useless. White's knight is deprived of the e4-square and Black can look forward to strengthening his positions on both flanks.

41 ♖f3 ♜d3 42 ♙c3 ♙d7?!

I think this was the appropriate moment for playing 42...♞e8! followed by ...♞d6 when the knight can reach b5, e4 or c4 when White's defences crack. I see no reasonable defence against this plan.

43 ♖f2 f5 44 ♖f3

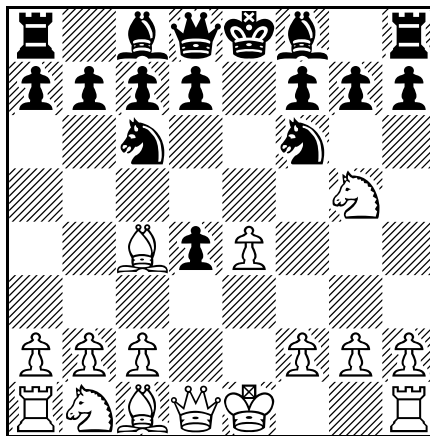
White could have gained some counterplay with 44 ♖h5 ♞e8 45 h4! gxh4 46 g5 when the g-pawn provides White with some drawing chances.

44...f4 45 ♞e2 ♞e6 46 h4 ♙a4! 47 ♞c1+ ♙c4 48 hxg5 ♙d1+ 49 ♖g2 0-1

It looks a bit early to resign the game, although White is technically lost. Perhaps White lost on time.

Game 25
K.Amann-E.Janosi
 Correspondence 2008

1 e4 e5 2 ♞f3 ♞c6 3 ♙c4 ♞f6 4 d4 exd4 5 ♞g5!?



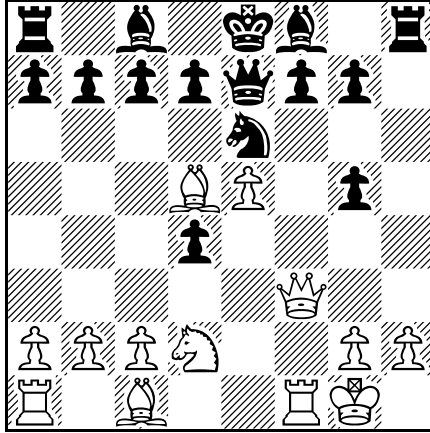
It never occurred to me that this move was quite playable for White before I started working on this book. In fact, it's a speciality of the Dutch GM Daan Brandenburg, who has employed it regularly against strong opposition with good results.

5...d5!

My preferred method of dealing with this variation. Black punishes White's arrogant knight jump by striking in the centre.

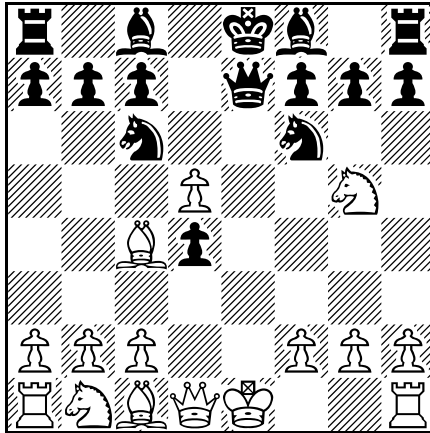
From a purely theoretical point of view, it should be noted that 5...♞e5 might even be

better. After 6 ♙b3 h6 7 f4 hxg5 8 fxe5 ♜xe4 we have a crazy position on the board, and although Black is probably better, there's total chaos which is probably what White wanted. 9 ♙d5 is what Brandenburg plays here (White has also tried 9 ♙xd4 and the surprising 9 ♙xf7+!), when play can go 9... ♜c5 10 0-0 ♜e6 11 ♚f3 ♚e7 12 ♜d2 .



Here Black's best seems to be 12... ♜f4! 13 ♙xb7 g4! 14 ♚e4 ♚h4 15 ♚xf4 ♚xh2+ 16 ♜f2 ♙xb7 17 ♚xb7 ♚xf4+ 18 ♜f3 ♚f5 19 ♚xa8+ ♜e7 20 ♙g5+ f6 21 exf6+ ♜f7 and my engine says that Black is slightly better. Mind-blowing stuff and certainly fun to analyse, but I'll leave that to the reader. I'm more than satisfied with the slight edge in the endgame we get in our main line, and I can't really recommend something I cannot fully grasp myself.

6 exd5 ♚e7+!



This is the main point behind 5...d5. This check interrupts White's development and he has to choose whether to give away the d5-pawn or greedily take the d4-pawn.

The tactical idea that every white player dreams of playing is 6... ♜xd5? 7 0-0 ♙e7 8

♞xf7! with which Morphy used to amuse himself in the 19th Century. Definitely something to watch out for.

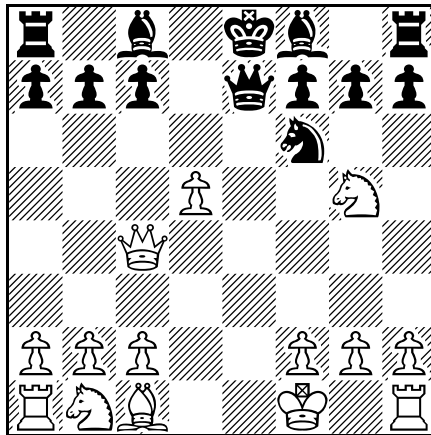
7 ♖f1

The main line:

a) 7 ♜e2 isn't very inspiring for White after 7...♞b4 8 ♞a3 ♞fxd5 when Black just seems to be a pawn up for nothing.

b) 7 ♜e2 ♞xd5 8 0-0 is a slightly more sensible way to sacrifice the d5-pawn as the black queen could become a target along the e-file, but Black retains the advantage with 8...h6 9 ♞f3 ♜g4!, which prepares castling queenside. The game G.Murawski-F.Barglowski, Ustron 2004, continued 10 c4 ♞b6 11 ♞xd4 ♜xe2 12 ♞xe2 ♞d8 13 ♞d2, at which point Black played the creative 13...♞d7!? and won a one-sided game, and I think Black can improve his play even further with 13...♞xc4.

7...♞e5 8 ♜xd4 ♞xc4 9 ♜xc4



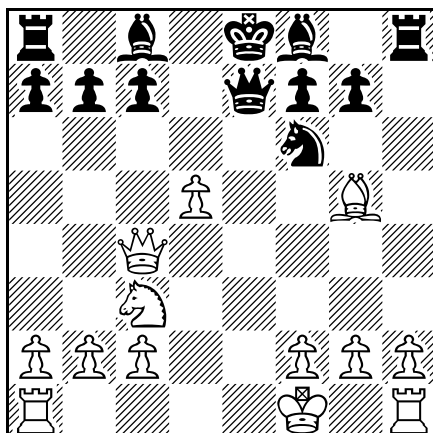
At this point Black is down a pawn, but he has excellent compensation. Apart from the weak d5-pawn, White's king has lost the right to castle and Black has a strong bishop-pair in an open position.

9...h6!

The most common move order is 9...♜c5, but I think this is inexact due to 10 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 11 ♞c3 when White's g5-knight can return to e4, giving him good chances to equalize. This is no longer an option if Black kicks the knight back to f3 immediately.

10 ♞f3

While reading through Bologan's book, I came across the stunning 10 ♞c3!? hxg5 11 ♜xg5.



This certainly looks more tempting than the main line. However, Black can neutralize White's initiative in many ways. The one I like best is 11...♚b4!?, which is a decent square for the queen, taking away many squares from the white queen and thus hindering White's attack:

a) Should White play 12 ♖e1+ we go 12...♗d8 and we develop naturally with ...♘d7 and ...♙e7, slowly unravelling our extra piece.

b) 12 ♚xc7 ♙e7 sees White having grabbed a third pawn, but none of them are particularly dangerous and the piece is definitely worth more in this case. Indeed, after 13 ♖e1 ♗f8 followed by ...♙f5, Black's extra piece should soon begin to tell.

10...♚c5!

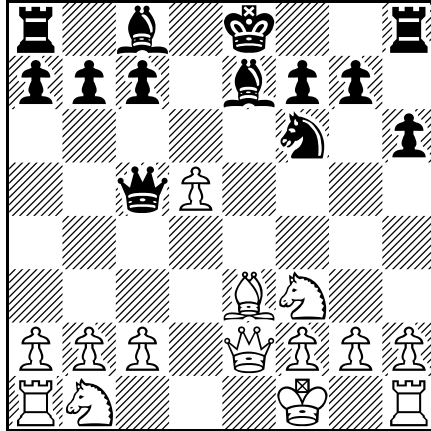
A key idea for Black in this variation. The only badly-placed black piece was the queen and so it is traded for White's only active piece. Apart from this, the d5-pawn and the f2-pawn will require White's attention.

If Black were to develop normally with, say, 10...♙g4 11 ♘c3 0-0-0, White can simply go 12 ♙e3 and it's not so easy for Black to develop his initiative further while White catches up in development.

11 ♚e2+

If White would play 11 ♚xc5 ♙xc5, Black's development is very smooth: 12 ♘c3 (12 c4 ♙f5 13 ♗e2 0-0-0 followed by ...♖he8+ and ...♗e4 looks crushing) 12...♙f5 would at least regain the pawn on c2, but Black should probably aim for ...0-0-0 and ...♗xd5 when the two bishops assure him of some advantage.

11...♙e7 12 ♙e3



This idea would be brilliant, if it wasn't for the fact that it doesn't solve White's problems. White temporarily gives up his extra pawn to catch up in development, but he has a tactical idea of how to regain it.

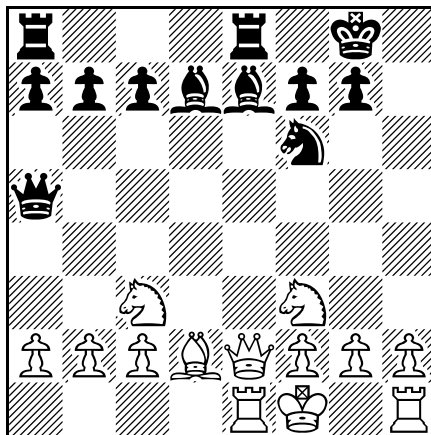
12...♙xd5 13 ♘c3 ♙a5 14 ♖e1 0-0! 15 ♕hxh6

And this was White's idea all along. White has got rid of his weak extra pawn on d5 and traded it for the pawn on h6, but let's face it, White can't really go pawn grabbing on h6 with bad development, a king on f1 and facing the bishop-pair.

15...♖e8 16 ♕d2

Houdini wants to play 16 ♙b5 ♙xb5+ 17 ♘xb5, but it's quite clear to me that after 17...gxh6 18 ♘xc7 ♕e6 19 ♘xa8 ♖xa8 Black has excellent winning chances as his minor pieces are so well placed and as the h1-rook hasn't joined the game yet.

16...♕d7



Black's bishops are ready to control the board.

17 ♖c4 b5 18 ♖b3 b4 19 ♞e5 ♕a6+ 20 ♔g1 ♙e6 21 ♖a4 ♗d6 22 ♞b1

I suspect White was starting to regret his pawn grabbing around now.

22...a5 23 c3 ♙f5 24 ♖b3 ♙f8!

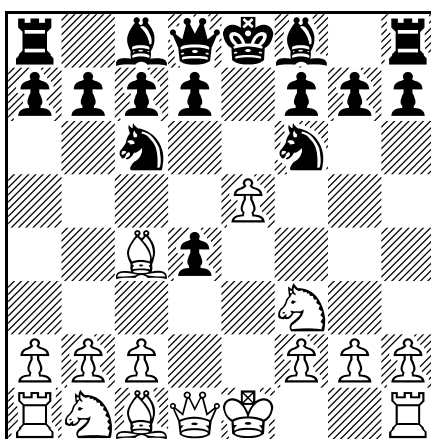
An ice-cold reaction, but then again this was a correspondence game. Of course, Black has many ways to crush White's position.

25 ♖xf7+ ♔h7 26 ♙f4 ♙xb1 27 ♖xb1 ♖xe5 28 ♙xe5 ♗xe5 29 ♖c4 ♙c5 30 g3 ♖f5 31 ♖f1 ♞e4 0-1

The Scotch Gambit

We have now arrived at the Scotch Gambit, which arises after the opening moves:

1 e4 e5 2 ♞f3 ♞c6 3 ♙c4 ♞f6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5!



This variation has been played a lot by Evgeny Sveshnikov and lately dynamic grandmasters such as Gawain Jones have used it at a high level. But it's especially popular at club level and it's been recommended in a repertoire book by Roman Dzindzichashvili, Lev Alburt and Eugene Perelshteyn. Lately, even GM Niclas Huschenbeth has recommended it as a surprise weapon in a video on the Chess24 website.

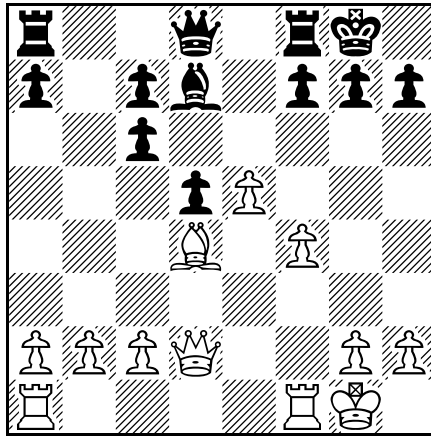
The first few moves in the main line are well known:

5...d5 6 ♙b5 ♞e4 7 ♞xd4

At this point Black can choose between 7...♙d7 and 7...♙c5. I'm not going to delve deeply into which move is the more accurate and why, because this is not going to be my main recommendation. Sure, Black is equal, but I don't really fancy the type of positions that arise.

It's easy for White to play his moves, and Black must be cautious not to fall for any traps, strategical or tactical. My good friend IM Jonathan Westerberg has played this line as White very successfully, and I'm amazed at how easy it's for Black to find himself in a bad position right out of the opening. Here's one example from the game J.Westerberg-K.Janzekovic, Maribor 2012:

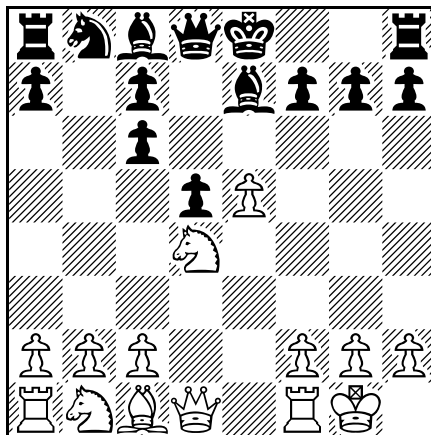
7...♔d7 8 ♖xc6 bxc6 9 0-0 ♘c5 10 f3 ♘g5 11 f4 ♗e4 12 ♘e3 0-0 13 ♘d2 ♗xd2 14 ♔xd2
 ♘xd4 15 ♘xd4



This was played in the first round of the World Youth Chess Championship of 2012, and I witnessed the game live. Jonathan convincingly squeezed his opponent on both sides of the board until he finally cracked. Actually, as I write these exact words, Jonathan is playing a very similar position in a rapid tournament being broadcast live, with the difference being a white knight on c5 instead of a bishop on d4.

After getting crushed a few times by Jonathan in this variation, I realized that I should seek a different kind of game. Browsing through the database I came across the following idea in an old game by Ivan Sokolov:

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘c4 ♗f6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 d5 6 ♘b5 ♗d7!? 7 0-0 ♘e7 8 ♖xc6 bxc6 9
 ♗xd4 ♗b8!



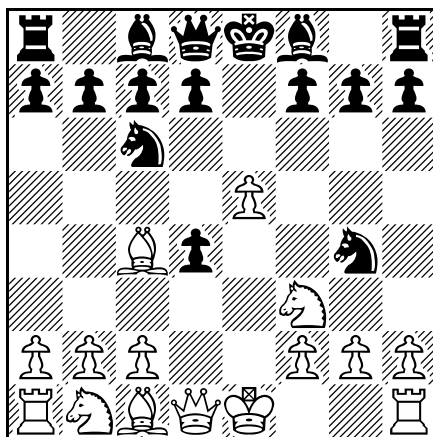
I really liked the beautiful concept of playing ...♗g8-f6-d7-b8, followed by pushing ...c5

and developing naturally from there on. Although this variation proved to be creative and viable, I realized that after 10 ♖c3 0-0 11 ♜f3! Black has no easy way of unravelling. Black is probably fine, but again I just don't fancy the positions that tend to arise.

My Proposed Solution

While working on this book, I realized that I had to deal with this variation once and for all. I had to find a variation where Black gets his fair share of the chances, while still leading to interesting positions where White can go wrong just as easily as Black. Eventually, I settled on:

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙c4 ♘f6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 ♘g4!?



This rare line is my recommendation against the Scotch Gambit. Black intends to play against White's thorn on e5, and undermine it with either ...d6 or ...f6. Before examining the main lines, it's important to point out that 5...♘g4 carries a trap.

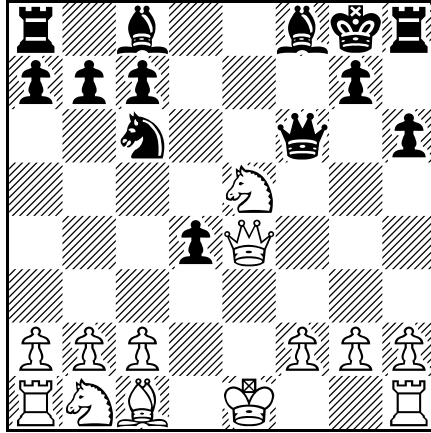
6 ♙xf7+?

If White is unfamiliar with our knight jump, he might look for an immediate refutation and play this move which is actually a bad mistake.

6...♙xf7 7 ♘g5+ ♙g8 8 ♜xg4 h6! 9 ♘f3 d6

It turns out that Black's king is completely safe and that White isn't really set to defend his centre.

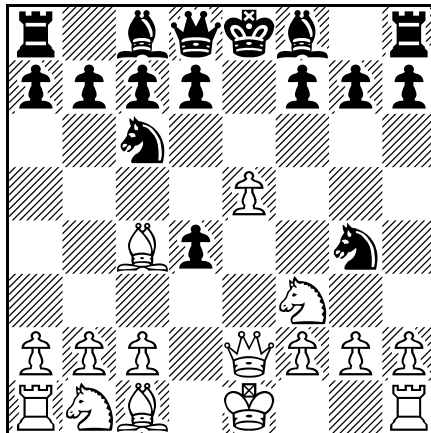
10 ♜e4 dxе5 11 ♘xe5 ♜f6



This will be followed by ...♙f5. Black's development is really quick and he also has a very strong bishop-pair. Meanwhile, his king is completely safe.

Game 26
H.Leks-D.Daulyte
 Wroclaw 2010

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 f6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 Ng4 6 Qe2



Some surprisingly strong players have played this, but the resulting positions look all but inspiring for White in my view. This line was also the recommendation for *White in Chess Openings for White, Explained* by Albur, Dzindzichashvili and Perelshteyn.

However, treating the position like a Budapest Gambit doesn't really work out because

after 6 ♖f4 d6 7 exd6 ♙xd6 8 ♖e2+ ♗f8 9 ♙xd6+ ♖xd6 Black is simply up a pawn. The king on f8 isn't exposed at all and Black has excellent development, with ...♙f5 and ...♖e8 on the cards.

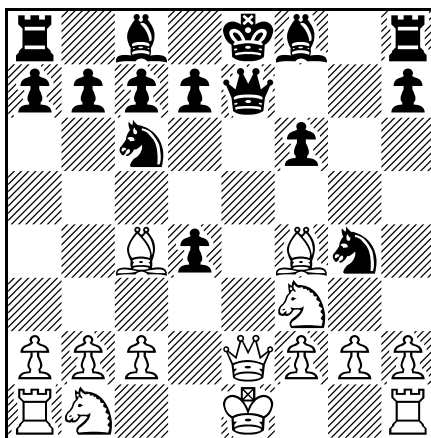
6...♖e7 7 ♙f4 f6!

Black cracks open White's centre. White's idea is to regain the d4-pawn and try to claim a small edge with well-placed pieces in the centre, but Black is going to make White fight for that pawn.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with 7...d6 either. After 8 exd6 I believe Black should play 8...cxd6!, insisting that White should be the one to take on e7: 9 ♖a3 a6! (it's not so easy for White to get the a3-knight into the game) 10 ♖d1 ♖xe2+ 11 ♙xe2 d5! and the knight is cut off on the rim. Black is absolutely fine here. Instead, the most common move is 8...♖xe2+, but after 9 ♙xe2 ♙xd6 10 ♙xd6 cxd6 11 ♖a3! White might just have a tiny pull. The pawn on d4 won't be possible to hold and d6 will be weak.

8 exf6 ♗xf6

My preference, but not the only move. Indeed, 8...gxf6 is unsurprisingly a speciality of Jonny Hector.



It might look strange, but Black wants to establish the e5-square for his knight. This variation is fine for Black, although after 9 0-0 ♖xe2 10 ♙xe2 ♗ge5 11 ♖bd2 followed by ♖b3, the position looks equal.

9 ♖bd2

White is trying to recapture his d4-pawn by all means possible. This he'll usually do with ♖b3, 0-0-0 and perhaps also ♙b5. In the long run, this is a pawn Black can't hold on to, but we can try to obtain other advantages while White recovers the pawn.

After 9 ♙xc7, the bishop actually gets out after 9...d6 10 ♙b5 ♗f7 11 ♙xc6 bxc6 12 ♖xe7+ ♙xe7, but Black's position is clearly superior here. Black's central pawns limit White's minor pieces and 13 ♖xd4?! lands White in even more difficulties after 13...♖d5 14 ♙a5 ♙f6 followed by ...♖e8 with a dangerous initiative.

9...d5!

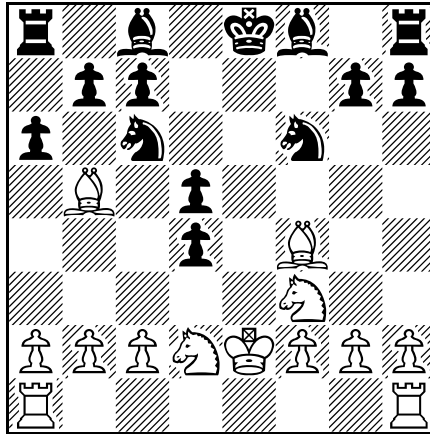
White scores horribly after this move.

In practice it's more common to play 9...d6 10 ♖b3 ♙g4, but after 11 ♚xe7+ ♙xe7 12 ♜bxd4 ♜xd4 13 ♜xd4 d5 it looks pretty equal. Of course, this isn't worse for Black, but I want to fight for an advantage.

10 ♙b5 ♚xe2+ 11 ♚xe2

This is the key position for this variation. At first glance White looks set to recapture his sacrificed pawn and equalize. True, both c7 and d4 are en prise, but Black can create another asset.

11...a6!



A lovely move.

12 ♙xc6+

12 ♙d3 has been seen as well, but I like the untried 12...♙d6! 13 ♙xd6 cxd6 when White doesn't get his pawn back after all. The tripled d-pawns look comical, but they control a lot of squares: 14 h3 (14 ♜b3?! ♙g4 was Black's point) 14...0-0 15 ♜b3 ♜h5! (there's a weak square on f4) 16 ♜bxd4 (16 g3 is taking things a bit too far: 16...♙d7 17 ♜bxd4 ♜xd4+ 18 ♜xd4 ♚ae8+ and White can't protect his kingside) 16...♜f4+ 17 ♚f1 ♙d7. After lots of work White has managed to regain his pawn and leave Black with ugly pawns on the d-file, but Black's activity is way more important. He can follow up with ...♜e5 or ...♜xd3 when he's slightly better. Also notice how difficult it is for White to unravel his kingside.

12...bxc6

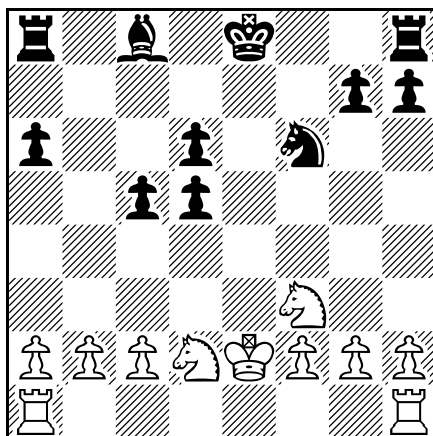
Black's structure looks comical, but no matter which pawn White captures, Black will be left with a strong pawn centre that will annoy White's minor pieces for a long time to come.

13 ♜xd4

Instead, 13 ♙xc7 c5 14 ♚ae1 ♙f5 15 ♚d1+ ♚d7 16 ♙g3 ♙d6 17 ♙xd6 ♚xd6 was the course of the game L.Hansen-J.Andersen, correspondence 2010. Black is obviously better

and went on to win.

13...c5 14 ♞4f3 ♟d6 15 ♟xd6 cxd6



White is clearly struggling. Black's central pawns are very strong and White's knights don't really have anything useful to do.

16 ♖he1 ♟f5 17 ♖ac1 ♟d7 18 ♞h4 ♖he8+ 19 ♟f1 ♖xe1+ 20 ♟xe1 ♟e6 21 f4

White is desperate for a plan, but it's difficult to suggest anything else. As we will soon see, though, this lunge just weakens White's position further.

21...♖b8 22 b3 d4 23 c3 dxc3 24 ♖xc3

White has managed to get rid of the doubled pawns, but Black's pressure remains. White still has difficulties finding a decent plan.

24...♖e8 25 ♟f1 ♞d5 26 ♖f3 ♞b4?!

This looks very natural, but it might be slightly inaccurate. Now White has some chances for counterplay, whereas after 26...♟g4 27 ♖g3 g6! White's counterplay is hard to find.

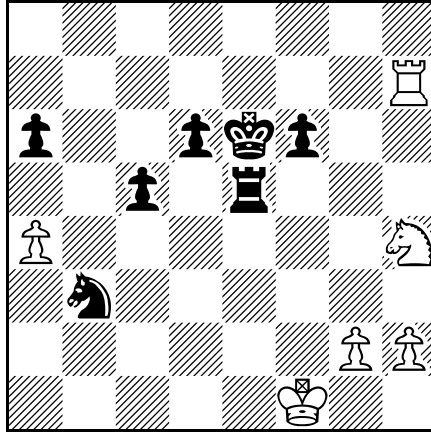
27 f5 ♟d5 28 ♖g3 ♖e7 29 a4?!

White should have tried to activate her pieces with 29 f6! gxf6 30 ♞f5, but Black is still much better here, even if after 30...♖e5 31 ♖g7+ ♟e6 32 g4 she doesn't have ...♞e3 resource as in the game.

29...♞c2 30 f6 gxf6 31 ♞f5 ♖e5 32 ♖g7+ ♟e6 33 ♞h4

33 g4 ♞e3+! is what Black was relying on.

33...♞d4 34 ♖xh7 ♟xb3 35 ♞xb3 ♞xb3



Black's strategical advantage has translated itself into an extra pawn, and the central pawns are much more dangerous than the h-pawn.

36 ♖g6 ♜f5+ **37** ♔e1 d5 **38** g4 ♜f3 **39** h4 d4 **40** ♞f8+ ♕d5 **41** h5 d3 **42** h6 ♔c4 **43** ♜d7 ♜h3 **44** h7 ♜h1+ **45** ♕f2 ♞d4 **46** ♔e3 ♜h3+ **47** ♔d2 ♜h2+ **48** ♔d1 ♔c3 **49** ♜e7 ♞f3 **0-1**

A very convincing game that more than defangs the 6 ♜e2 variation.

6 0-0

In this book, I'm going to propose quite a few novel ideas. Some of them are so novel, it's difficult to find a suitable game with which to showcase them. The 6 0-0 variation is one of those cases and so instead of annotating a full game, the following variations are solely based on my analysis.

1 e4 e5 **2** ♞f3 ♞c6 **3** ♕c4 ♞f6 **4** d4 exd4 **5** e5 ♞g4 **6 0-0**

