

Exeter Chess Club: The Italian Game for beginners

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Contents

1 Exeter Chess Club: The Italian Game for beginners	4
2 Introduction	5
2.1 The trouble with the Giuoco Piano (is the Giuoco Pianissimo)	5
3 Basic ideas in the Italian Game	7
3.0.1 All the basic ideas: White,R - Al Marif,S [C51 Evans' Gambit] (London LB), 1990	7
4 Ideas mainly for White	9
4.1 Develop rapidly and take over the centre	9
4.1.1 The raid with central pawns: Boleslavsky - Scitov [C54 Giuoco Piano] (Moscow) 1933	9
4.1.2 The raid with central pawns: Morphy,Paul - Laroche,H [Evans' Gambit, C52] Paris, 1859	9
4.1.3 The raid with central pawns: Morphy,Paul(bl.sim) - Cunningham [Giuoco Piano, C54] London, 1859	10
4.1.4 Central advantage: Bastian,Herbert - Eng,Holger (10) [Giuoco Piano, C54] Bad Neuenahr ch-DE, 1984	11
4.2 Catch the Black King in the middle	11
4.2.1 The King caught in the middle (and Central advantage): Morphy - Hampton, H [Evans' Gambit, C52] (London) 1858	11
4.2.2 King caught in the middle: Fischer - Fine RH [Evans' Gambit, C52] (New York) 1963	12
4.2.3 King caught in the middle: Anderssen,Adolf - Dufresne,J [Evans' Gambit, C52] Berlin 'Evergreen', 1852	13
4.2.4 King caught in the middle: Romero Holmes,Alfonse - Estremera Panos,Serg [Giuoco Piano, C54] Leon, 1989	13
4.3 The King's-side attack.	14
4.3.1 King's-side attack: Morphy,Paul - Amateur [Giuoco Piano, C51] London, 1858 . .	14
4.3.2 Littlewood - Paish (Blindfold)1993	15
4.3.3 King's-side attack: Euwe,Max - O'Hanlon,John [Giuoco Piano, C54] Hastings, 1919	15
4.3.4 The Fried Liver raid: Morphy,Paul(bl.sim) - Forde,A [Evans' Gambit, C52] New Orleans, 1858	16

4.4	The Queen's-side attack.	16
4.4.1	Move to the Queen's-side: Szecsi - Szarka [Giuoco Piano, C54] cr, 1987	16
5	Ideas for Black	18
5.1	Hit back with ...d5	18
5.1.1	Black hits back with ...d5: Marache,N - Morphy,Paul [Evans' Gambit, C52] New York, 1857	18
5.1.2	Black hits back with ...d5: Treiber,Timo - Kurz,Ralf (07) [Giuoco Piano, C54] Baden Baden, 1990	19
5.2	Catch the White King in the middle	19
5.2.1	Black catches the King in the middle: Noa,Josef - Kopylov [Evans' Gambit, C52] Leningrad, 1937	19
5.3	Counterattack on the White King's-side	20
5.3.1	Black's King's-side counterattack: Mongredien,A - Morphy,Paul (07) [Evans' Gambit, C52] Paris m, 1859	20
5.3.2	Black's King's-side counterattack: Saint Amant - Morphy,Paul [Giuoco Piano, C54] Paris, 1858	21
5.4	Black's chances in the endgame	21
5.4.1	Black's endgame chances: Hammond,G - Morphy,Paul [Giuoco Piano, C54] New York, 1857	21
5.5	Some traps in the Italian Game	22
5.5.1	A poor line for White in the Closed Variation of the Giuoco Piano	22
5.5.2	Another trap in the Closed Variation of the Giuoco Piano	23
5.5.3	Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. O-O	23
5.5.4	Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. O-O	23
5.5.5	Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. O-O	24
5.5.6	Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. cxd4	24
5.5.7	Trap in the Moller Attack	25
5.5.8	Bernstein's Trap in the Moller Attack	26
6	Some Variations in the Italian Game	27
6.1	Main line Guioco Piano 4. c3	27
6.1.1	Risky main line 7. Nc3	28
6.1.2	Safe main line 7. Bd2	33
6.1.3	The closed variation 4...Bb6	34
6.2	Evans' Gambit 4. b4	34
6.2.1	Evans' Gambit Declined (4...Bb6)	34
6.2.2	Evans' Gambit Accepted (4...Bxb4)	35
6.2.3	Kasparov, Gary-Anand, Viswanathan, Riga 1993	37
7	Appendix 1. Why is it called "Italian"?	42

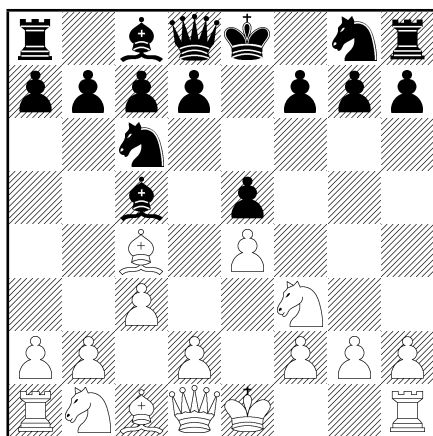
8	Appendix 2. Oh, if you must... some ideas for playing the Giuoco Pianissimo	43
8.0.4	Regis (Exeter) - Orpwood (Salford), 1987.	43
8.0.5	A trap in the Giuoco Pianissimo	44
8.0.6	Another trap in the Giuoco Pianissimo	44
8.0.7	One more trap in the Giuoco Pianissimo	44
8.0.8	Example Game in the Giuoco Pianissimo: Chambers-Vorhees (Dayton, Ohio) 1972	45

Chapter 1

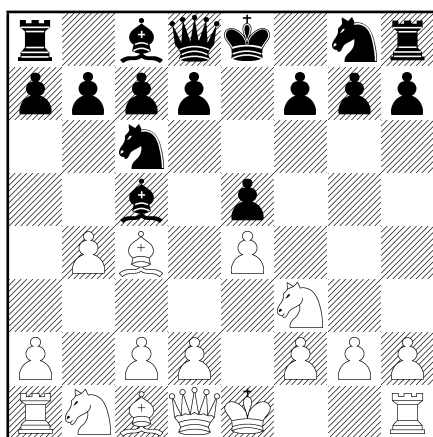
Exeter Chess Club: The Italian Game for beginners

The Giuoco Piano and Evans' Gambit

Giuoco Piano



Evans' Gambit



An Exeter Junior Chess Club booklet

Edition 3.18, April, 96

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Chapter 2

Introduction

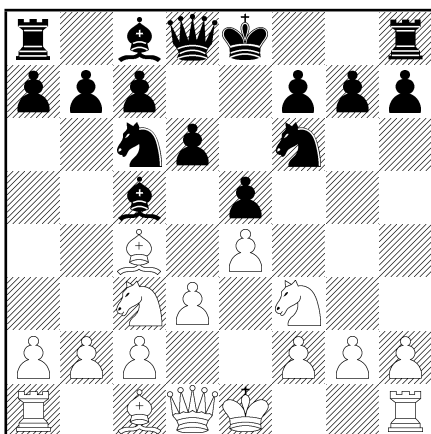
This is an updated and expanded version of a booklet first written in 1994. The major change is the conversion of the ‘example games’ section to a much larger ‘ideas and traps’ section.

2.1 The trouble with the Giuoco Piano (is the Giuoco Pianissimo)

The name *Giuoco Piano* means ‘quiet game’, but it is not really quiet. When it got its name, people were still playing the bloodthirsty variations of the King’s Gambit like the *Muzio Gambit* (1. e4 e5 2. f4 e×f4 3. ♘f3 g5 4. ♗c4 g4 5. O-O g×f3 6. ♚×f3). Compared to that, I suppose the Giuoco Piano is quiet! But there is a variation to be avoided, which is the *Giuoco Pianissimo*. That means ‘very quiet game’.

It looks like this:

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. ♘c3 ♗f6 5. d3 d6

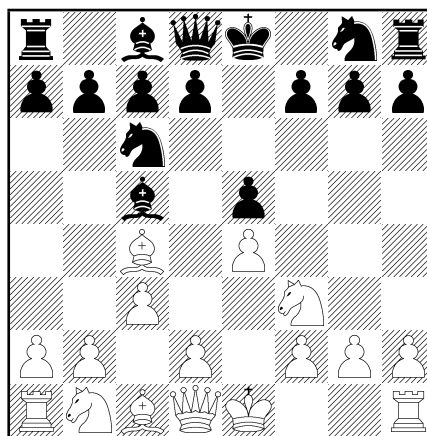


Junior players can usually get to this point safely but often don’t really enjoy the game that results. The position is blocked, the sides are equal and it’s

hard to get things going. It can take a long time to beat worse players because things are so solid. Also, it may be that almost every game you play ends up something like this, and perhaps you would like some variety.

Why does this go wrong? Well, you should know that Plan A in the opening (for White and Black) is to play e4 and d4. If you both play sensibly 1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 White cannot play d4, so you both continue sensibly 4. ♘c3 ♗f6 5. d3 d6. Which is where we came in. If you really want to play like this, see the last section, but I don’t think it’s a good way to play.

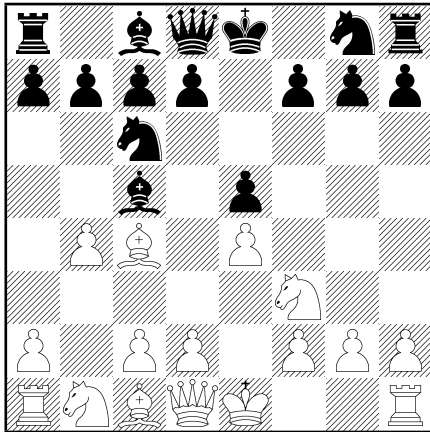
Knowing this can happen, you need to know the two great ways to avoid it, which lead to open exciting games:



1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. ♘c3

This is the main line of the Giuoco Piano. The idea is to play c3, d4 and only after ...exd4,cxd4 do you play Nc3. You then have your old-fashioned centre and good prospects of a quick attack down the centre or on the K-side. I often call this **Plan A**.

Black can use the temporary weakness of e4 to play 4. ... , ♗f6 when it is difficult to stop Black upsetting your plan a little.



1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♗c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4!?

This is the Evans' Gambit, the "gift of the gods to a languishing chess world". After 4. ... ♙×b4, 5. c3 ♙c5 6. d4 you have gained a move on Plan A, although you are a Pawn down. The Evans' is more dangerous than the Giuoco Piano - for both sides!

Enterprising chess players still occasionally trot this one out at master level: Bobby Fischer and John Nunn have played it with success.

So, let's have a look at some ideas in these more exciting lines. I'll show you

1. first, the basic ideas
2. secondly, some important traps
3. lastly, some variations

You should read and play over the examples with a board, and do them in the order above: (1) ideas, (2) traps, and only then (3) variations. This is how to study any opening.

Chapter 3

Basic ideas in the Italian Game

I've described some of them above.

bring your Bishop onto the a2-g8 diagonal, eyeing up the tender f7 point

play c2-c3 and d2-d4 to take over the **centre**

develop your other pieces **rapidly**, bring your King's Rook to e1. If you have a lead in development, **break open lines** to get at the Black position

keep the opponent's pieces from settling with **central pawn stabs**. Usually we say, don't make time-wasting pawn moves, like h2-h3. But if you play e4-e5 attacking a Knight on f6, the Knight has to move, and so you haven't given Black a chance to catch up in development, and you may have dislodged an important defender. It's odd that, because Pawns are worth the least, nothing can resist their attacks!

try and catch the opponent's **King in the middle**, or, if it escapes by castling, **attack on the King's-side**. Usually, only the Evans' Gambit and Moller Attack in the Giuoco Piano are fast enough to catch the King in the middle.

if your attack doesn't come about, fast development and siezing the central files may give you an **advantage in the endgame**

Because the basic layout is similar for both sides, some of these ideas also apply to playing Black: in addition Black should strive for:

rapid **development**

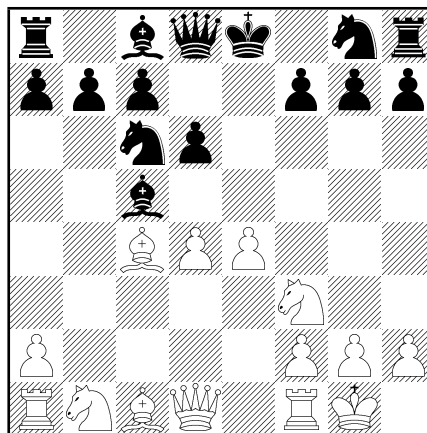
castle into safety

counter with **...d5**

play for **counterattack** on the King's-side or an **endgame advantage** First, I'll show you an example game which includes the ideas I have listed above.

3.0.1 All the basic ideas: White,R - Al Marif,S [C51 Evans' Gambit] (London LB), 1990

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4. b4 ♙×b4 5. c3 ♙c5 6. O-O!? d6 7. d4 e×d4 8. c×d4

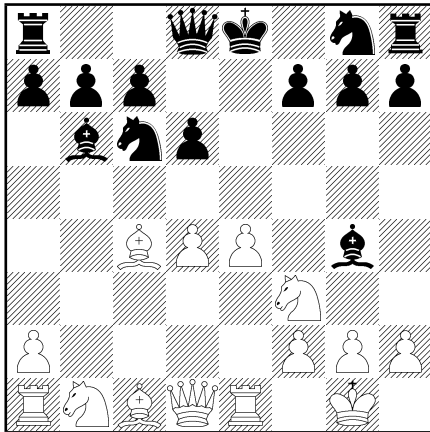


Central advantage: the Plan A pawn centre with **good development**.

8. ..., ♙b6 9. ♖e1

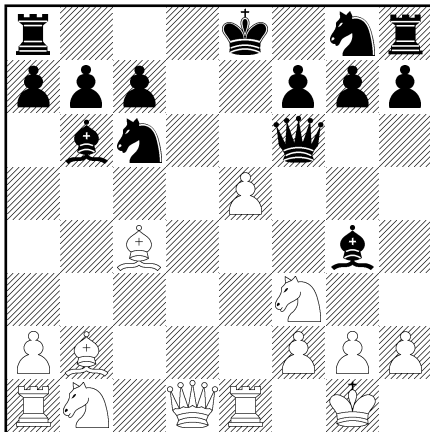
The Rook comes to e1, giving the King a Hard Stare.

9. ..., ♙g4



White's next points both Bishops at the King's-side.

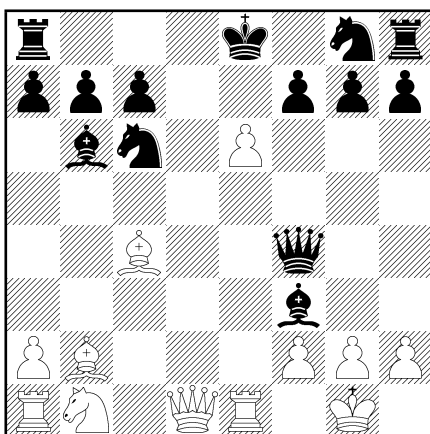
10. ♖b2 ♜f6 11. e5 d×e5 12. d×e5



Raiding by centre pawns. The Pawn wins time by the attack on the Queen, and then **breaks open lines** by a further step forward.

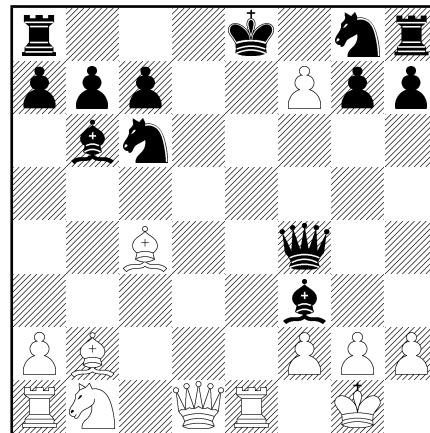
12. ..., ♜f4 13. e6 ♙×f3

Black hopes to gain time by taking a piece with an attack on the Queen.



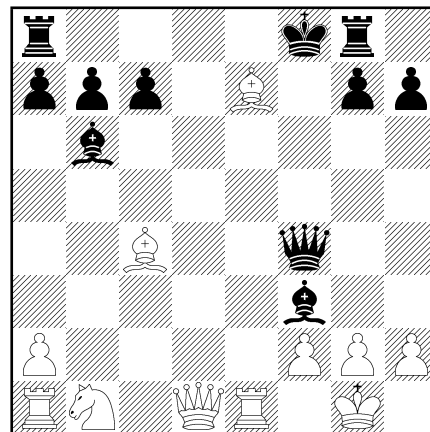
14. e×f7+

Not a bit of it! - Check stops everything. In fact White never moves the Queen or takes the Bishop!



Attack on f7 along the "Italian Diagonal"

14. ..., ♙f8 15. f×g8=♜+ ♜×g8 16. ♙a3+ ♞e7 17. ♙×e7+



The **King caught in the middle**. Black resigns... 1-0

An exciting game! Let's have a look at each of these ideas again in actual play, and how to play when you are Black.

Chapter 4

Ideas mainly for White

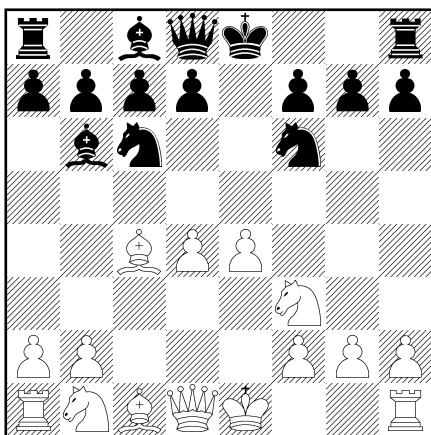
4.1 Develop rapidly and take over the centre

You should know this idea already. Get your pieces out and fighting - if they are on the back rank you might as well not have them! And of course, they are most effective in the centre.

The way to take over the centre is with your e- and d-pawns. These pawns can make little steps down the middle towards the Black King, and on the way stamp on the toes of the Black pieces to make them jump out of the way!

4.1.1 The raid with central pawns: Boleslavsky - Scitov [C54 Giuoco Piano] (Moscow) 1933

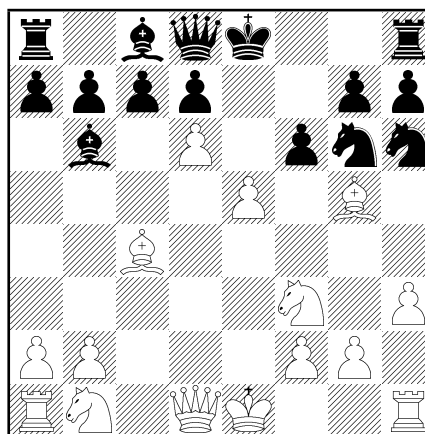
1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕c4 ♕c5 4. c3 ♘f6
5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♕b6



This move gives White too much of a free hand. The “Plan A” pawn centre just rolls over the Black position.

7. e5 Stamp!
7. ..., ♘g4 8. h3 Stamp!

8. ..., ♘h6 9. d5 Stamp!
9. ..., ♘e7 10. d6 Stamp!
10. ..., ♘g6
The Pawns have marched forward, causing the Black pieces to scatter. Time to develop a piece...
11. ♕g5 f6

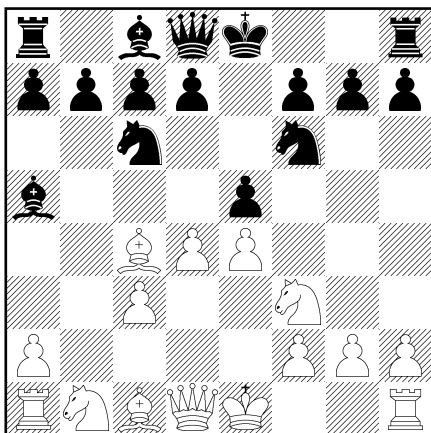


12. e×f6 g×f6
White can win a piece, but:
13. ♖e2+ ♔f8 14. ♕×h6# 1-0

Isn't that better than the Giuoco Pianissimo?

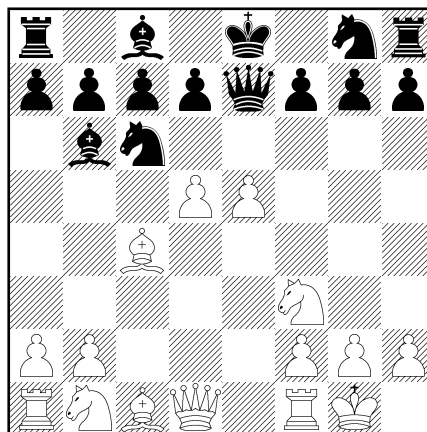
4.1.2 The raid with central pawns: Morphy, Paul - Laroche, H [Evans' Gambit, C52] Paris, 1859

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕c4 ♕c5 4. b4
♕×b4 5. c3 ♕a5 6. d4 ♘f6



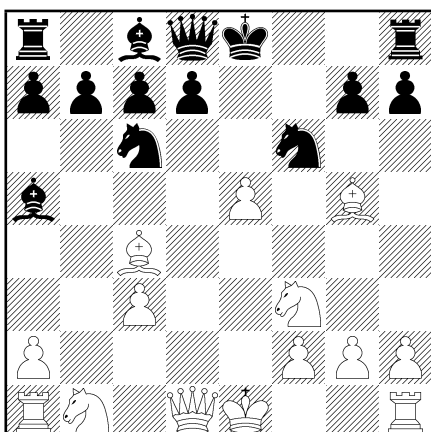
Now a little Pawn stab.

7. d×e5 ♞g4 8. ♙g5 f6 9. e×f6 ♞×f6 10. e5



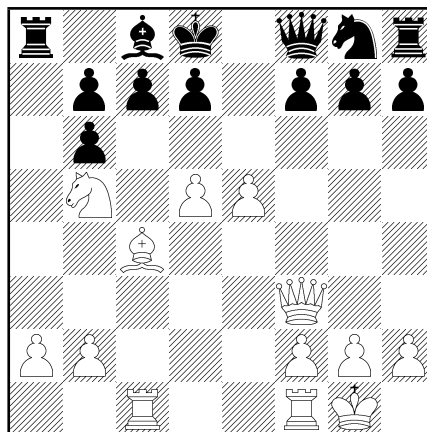
This we would call a *central pawn roller*.

9. ..., ♜c5 10. ♞a3 ♞d4 11. ♙e3 ♞×f3+ 12. ♜×f3 ♜f8 13. ♙×b6 a×b6 14. ♞b5 ♙d8 15. ♜ac1



Another awkward Pawn raid.

10. ..., h6 11. e×f6 h×g5 12. f×g7 ♜e7+ 13. ♜e2 1-0

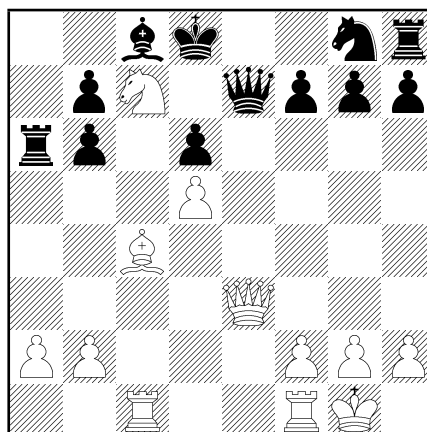


Black is getting squashed by those Pawns.

15. ..., d6 16. e×d6 c×d6 17. ♜e3 ♜a6 18. ♞c7 ♜e7

4.1.3 The raid with central pawns: Morphy,Paul(bl_sim) - Cunningham [Giuoco Piano, C54] London, 1859

1. e4 e5 2. ♙c4 ♙c5 3. c3 ♞c6 4. ♞f3 ♞f6
5. d4 e×d4 6. e5 ♜e7 7. O-O ♞g8 8. c×d4
♙b6 9. d5



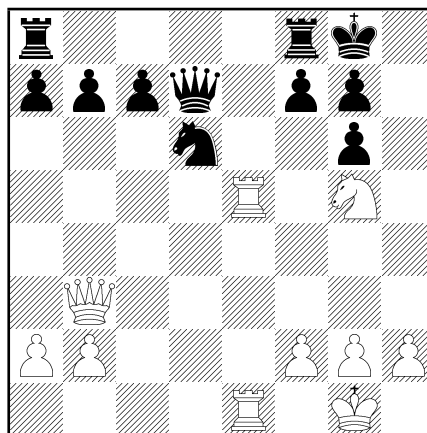
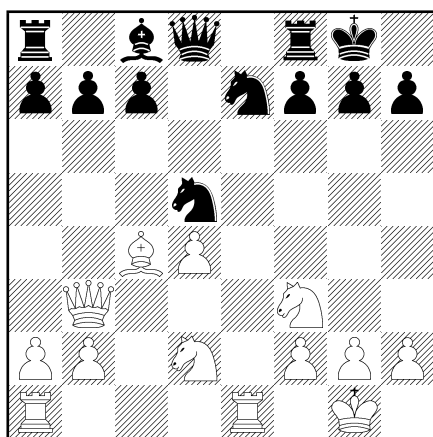
Black wants to exchange Queens.

19. ♖e6+! f×e6 20. ♗×a6 ♗d7 21. ♗b5 ♖e8 22. d×e6 ♖f6 23. ♖c8+ 1-0

17. ♖×g6 h×g6 18. R7e5 Qxd4 19. ♖f3 ♖d7 20. ♖g5 ♖d6

4.1.4 Central advantage: Bastian, Herbert - Eng, Holger (10) [Giuoco Piano, C54] Bad Neuenahr ch-DE, 1984

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. c3 ♖f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♗b4+ 7. ♗d2 ♗×d2+ 8. ♖b×d2 d5 9. e×d5 ♖×d5 10. ♖b3 ♖ce7 11. O-O O-O 12. ♖fe1

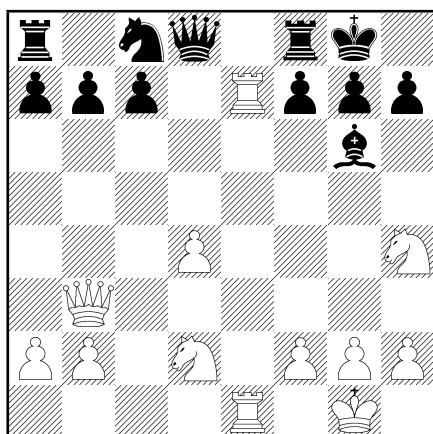


Black is starting to get sorted out but White's next move tempts the f-pawn to move...

21. ♖b4 f6 22. ♖e7 ♖b5 23. ♖×g7+ ♖×g7 24. ♖e7+ ♖f7 25. ♖×f7+ ♖×f7 26. ♖e6+ 1-0

This is the Main line position. Most of the Pawns have disappeared, but Black must be careful not to let the White pieces dominate the central squares and the e-file.

12. ..., ♖b6 13. ♗d3 ♗f5 14. ♖×e7 ♗×d3 15. ♖ae1 ♗g6 16. ♖h4 ♖c8



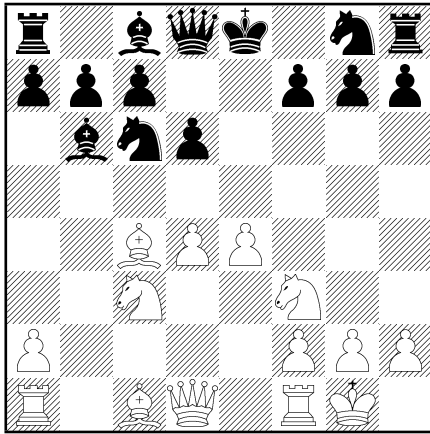
4.2 Catch the Black King in the middle

As I said, this is mostly an idea for the Evans' Gambit. White's pieces charge out before Black can play ...Nf6 and ...O-O, and before the defence can get organised.

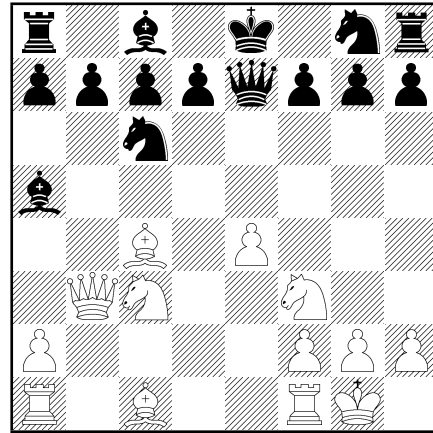
4.2.1 The King caught in the middle (and Central advantage): Morphy - Hampton, H [Evans' Gambit, C52] (London) 1858

White has far more active pieces and control of the e-file. This is an easy game to understand, and, hopefully, imitate.

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. b4 ♗×b4 5. c3 ♗c5 6. O-O d6 7. d4 e×d4 8. c×d4 ♗b6 9. ♖c3



8. ♖b3 ♗e7 9. ♘c3

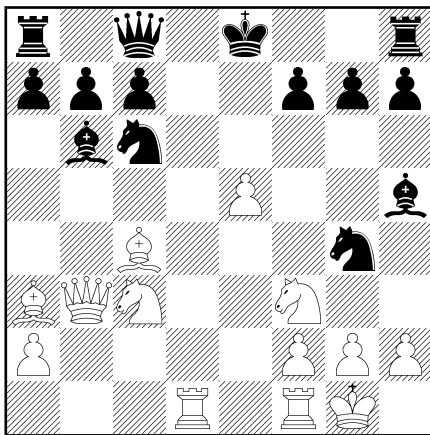


This simple developing move is best, but not much played before Morphy. Instead they used to rush with 9. d5 or hesitate with 9. h3.

9. ..., ♗f6 10. e5 d×e5 11. ♙a3

Stops the Black King castling.

11. ..., ♙g4 12. ♖b3 ♙h5 13. d×e5 ♗g4 14. ♜ad1 ♖c8



White has a model position, while Black's pieces are disorganised and the King vulnerable.

15. e6 f6 16. ♖b5 ♙g6 17. ♙d5 1-0

4.2.2 King caught in the middle: Fischer - Fine RH [Evans' Gambit, C52] (New York) 1963

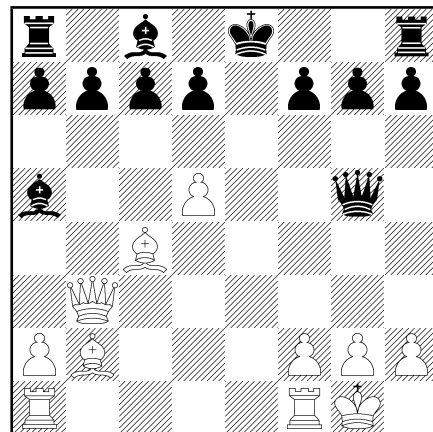
This game was played as a 'friendly' game at Fine's house.

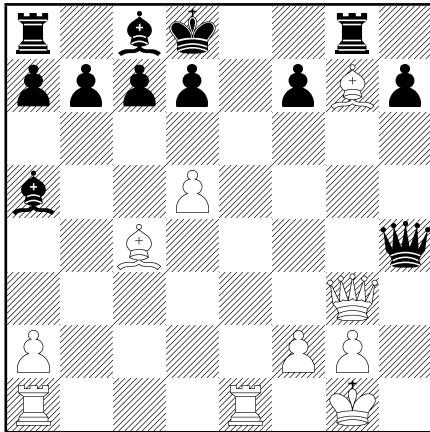
1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4. b4 ♙×b4 5. c3 ♙a5 6. d4 e×d4 7. O-O d×c3

"A little too greedy", said Modern Chess Openings, and Fischer agreed.

Fischer now finds a nice deflecting move.

14. h4 ♖×h4 15. ♙×g7 ♜g8 16. ♜fe1+ ♔d8 17. ♖g3





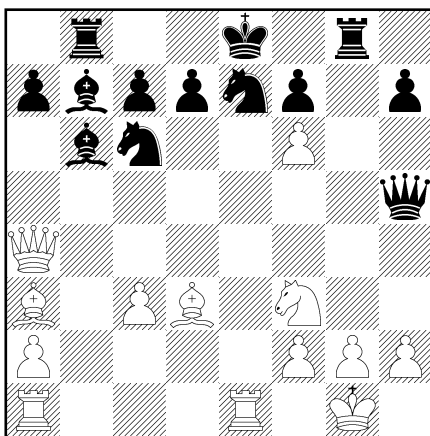
1-0

Another, conclusive deflection. The Black Queen cannot defend the f6 square, so if 17. ... ♔g3 18. ♕f6 mate.

4.2.3 King caught in the middle: Anderssen, Adolf - Dufresne, J [Evans' Gambit, C52] Berlin 'Evergreen', 1852

This is a very famous game, published in newspapers all over the world at the time.

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. b4 ♗×b4 5. c3 ♗a5 6. d4 e×d4 7. O-O d3 8. ♚b3 ♚f6 9. e5 ♚g6 10. ♜e1 ♞ge7 11. ♗a3 b5 12. ♚×b5 ♜b8 13. ♚a4 ♗b6 14. ♞bd2 ♗b7 15. ♞e4 ♚f5 16. ♗×d3 ♚h5 17. ♞f6+ g×f6 18. e×f6 ♜g8

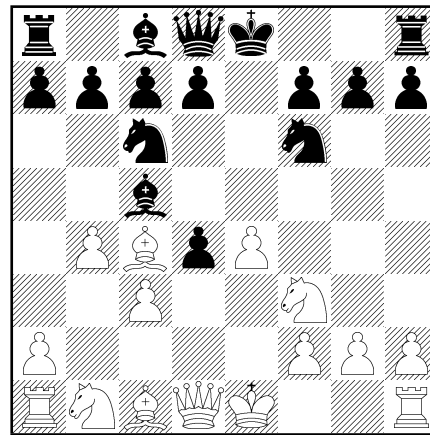


In playing his next move, Anderssen must have seen the mate at the end. Superb!

19. ♜ad1 ♚×f3 20. ♜×e7+ ♞×e7 21. ♚×d7+ ♚×d7 22. ♗f5+ ♚e8 23. ♗d7+ ♚f8 24. ♗×e7# 1-0

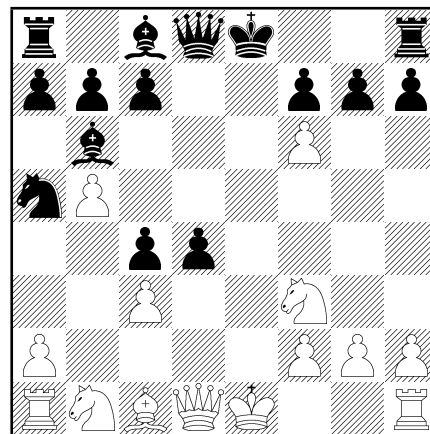
4.2.4 King caught in the middle: Romero Holmes, Alfonse - Estremera Panos, Serg [Giucco Piano, C54] Leon, 1989

1. e4 e5 2. ♞f3 ♞c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. c3 ♞f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. b4



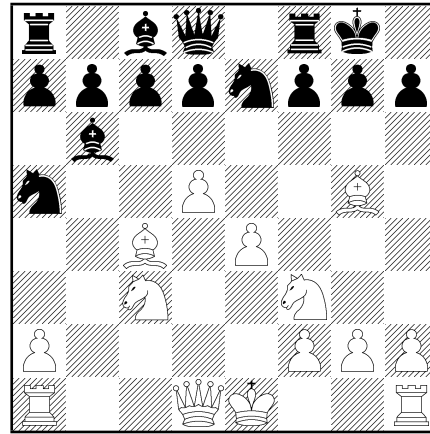
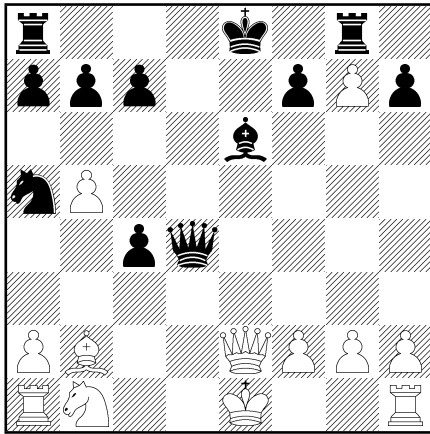
An unusual line.

6. ... ♗b6 7. e5 d5 8. e×f6 d×c4 9. b5 ♞a5



White has yet to show anything for his efforts.

10. ♚e2+ ♗e6 11. f×g7 ♜g8 12. ♞×d4 ♗×d4 13. c×d4 ♚×d4 14. ♗b2

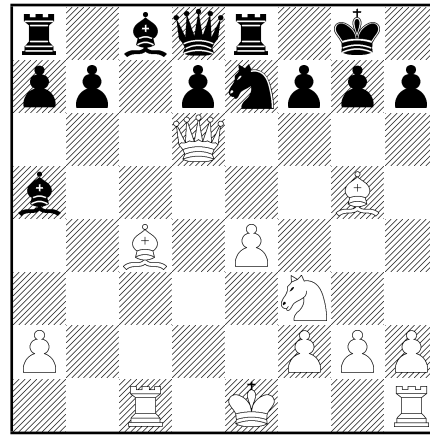
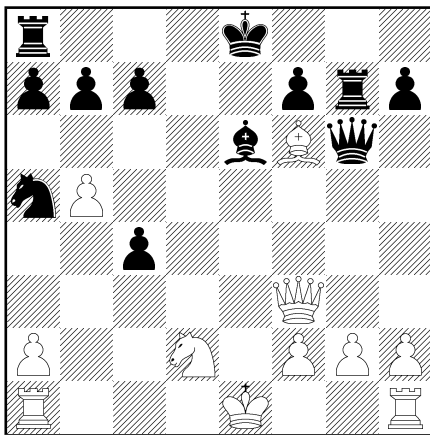


This move hangs on to the g-pawn, without which Black would be OK. It's still all very muddly!

Black has castled, but White is still out get the King.

14. ... ♖d3 15. ♗f6 ♖g6 16. ♖f3 ♜xg7 17. ♗d2

11. d6 cxd6 12. ♗d5 ♖ac6 13. ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 14. ♖xd6 ♜e8 15. ♜c1 ♗a5+



Black jumps at a loose Pawn...

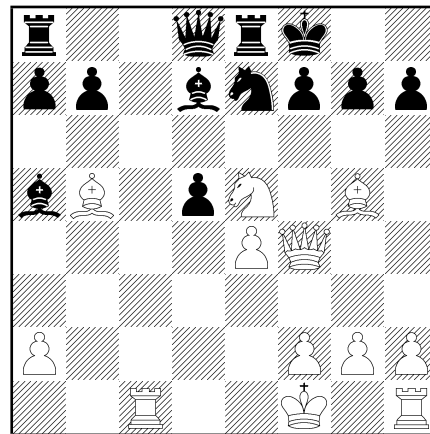
White's next move is an important one: he will have to win the game without his King's Rook!

17. ... ♖xg2 18. ♖a3 1-0

16. ♖f1 ♖f8 17. ♖f4 d5 18. ♗b5 ♗d7 19. ♗e5

4.3 The King's-side attack.

Of course, if Black is not greedy you may see the Black King flee to the King's-side. But all the things that make the attack on the uncastled King work - better development, central control and open lines - also make a King's-side attack work!

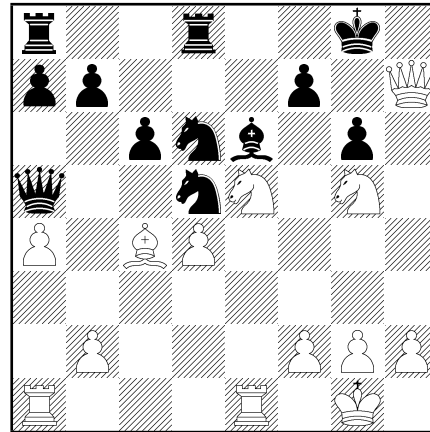
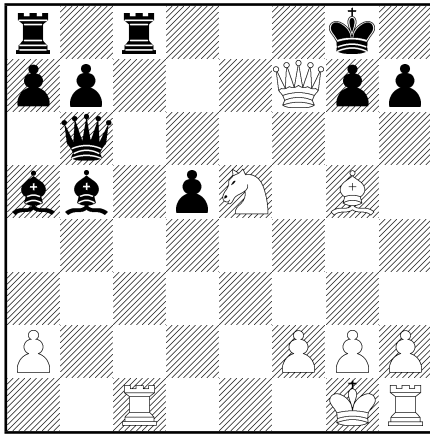


4.3.1 King's-side attack: Morphy, Paul - Amateur [Giuoco Piano, C51] London, 1858

1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. b4 ♗xb4 5. c3 ♗c5 6. d4 exd4 7. cxd4 ♗b6 8. ♗g5 ♗ge7 9. ♗c3 O-O 10. d5 ♗a5

A well-judged sacrifice.

19. ..., ♘×b5+ 20. ♔g1 f5 21. e×f5 ♖b6 22. f6 ♜g8 23. f7 ♜ec8 24. f×g8=♖+ ♔×g8 25. ♖f7+



The entry of the Queen decides.

19. ..., ♔f8 20. ♜×e6+ f×e6 21. ♘×d5 and N×g6+ 1-0

This was one of eight games played blindfold by Paul - that is, he played by calling out moves to eight opponents, each of whom had a board!

White has got his attack going nicely now.

25. ..., ♔h8 26. ♜×c8+ ♜×c8 27. ♖×d5 h6 28. ♜f7+ ♔h7 29. ♖f5+ ♖g6 30. ♖×c8 ♖b1+ 31. ♖c1 ♖f5 32. ♘e3 ♖×f7 33. ♖b1+ 1-0

4.3.3 King's-side attack: Euwe,Max - O'Hanlon,John [Giuoco Piano, C54] Hastings, 1919

1. e4 e5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3. ♘c4 ♘c5 4. c3 ♜f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♘b4+ 7. ♜c3 ♜×e4 8. O-O ♘×c3 9. d5 ♘f6 10. ♜e1 ♜e7 11. ♜×e4 d6 12. ♘g5 ♘×g5 13. ♜×g5 O-O

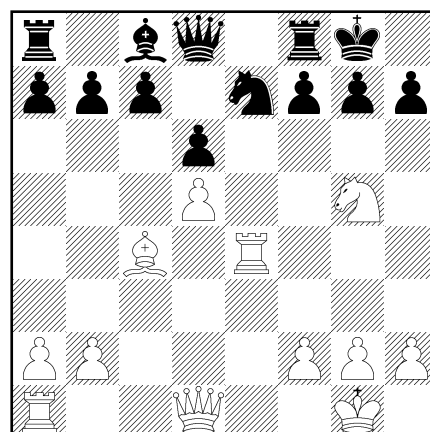
4.3.2 Littlewood - Paish (Blindfold)1993

1. e4 e5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3. ♘c4 ♘c5 4. c3 ♜f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♘b4+ 7. ♘d2 ♘×d2+ 8. ♜b×d2 d5 9. e×d5 ♜×d5 10. ♖b3! ♜ce7 11. O-O O-O

12. ♜fe1 c6 13. a4

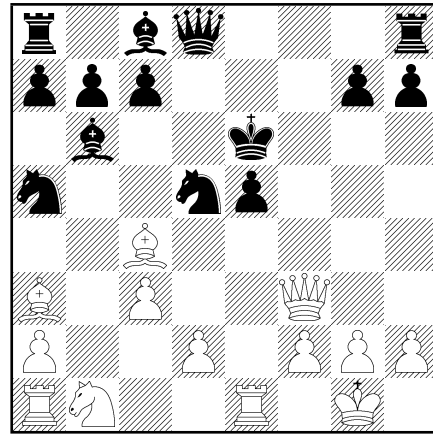
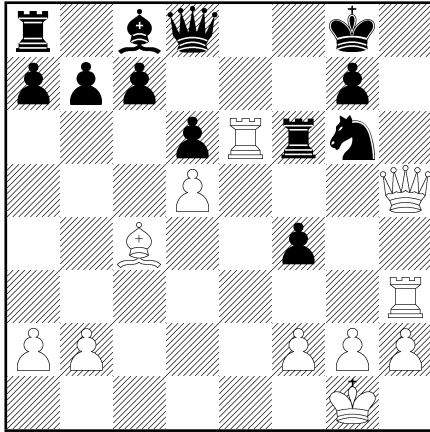
Fritz knows about several alternatives here: h6, Qb6, Qb7, Rb8, b6 and so on. Littlewood's opponent found a new one, but the decentralising ...Qa5 does little towards getting Black's position sorted.

13. ..., ♖a5 14. ♜e4 ♜d8 15. ♜e5 ♜f5 16. ♖d3 ♘e6 17. ♜g5 g6 18. ♖h3 ♜d6 19. ♖×h7+



White now plays a break-up sacrifice.

14. ♜×h7! ♔×h7 15. ♜h4+ ♔g8 16. ♖h5 f5 17. ♜e1 ♜g6 18. ♜h3 f4 19. ♜e6 ♜f6



Black has no time to organise a defence of all of his weaknesses.

20. ♖h7+ ♔f8 21. ♖h8+ ♜xh8 22. ♜xh8+ ♔f7 23. ♜xd8 c6 24. ♜ee8 ♙d7 25. dxc6+ ♙e6 26. ♙xe6+ ♜xe6 27. ♜xa8 ♜xe8 28. ♜xe8 ♔xe8 29. cxb7 1-0

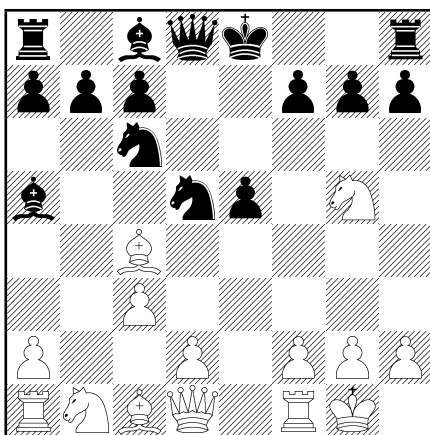
How can White get at the King?

13. ♜xe5+! ♔xe5 14. d4+ ♔e6 15. g4 g6 16. ♖e4+ ♔f7 17. ♙xd5+ ♔g7 18. ♙e7 ♜e8 19. ♖e5+ ♔h6 20. g5+ ♔h5 21. ♙f3+ ♙g4 22. ♖g3 ♜d7 23. ♖h3# 1-0

This too was one of a number of games played by Morphy without sight of the board.

4.3.4 The Fried Liver raid: Morphy, Paul (bl_sim) - Forde, A [Evans' Gambit, C52] New Orleans, 1858

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4. b4 ♙xb4 5. c3 ♙a5 6. O-O ♗ge7 7. ♗g5 d5 8. exd5 ♗xd5



You may know the Fried Liver Attack - here is a version of it in the Evans' Gambit.

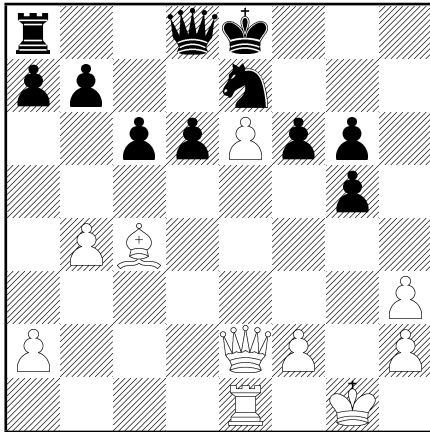
9. ♗xh7 ♔xh7 10. ♖f3+ ♔e6 11. ♙a3 ♙b6 12. ♜e1 ♗a5

4.4 The Queen's-side attack.

Black's Queen's-side may be late coming out, and may be a target for a direct attack by e.g. Qd1-b3xb7. But if the Black King cannot feel entirely safe on the King's-side, and not at all in the centre, perhaps your opponent will castle Queen's-side? This is usually easier to attack than the King's-side, because you won't mind moving your Queen's-side Pawns forward!

4.4.1 Move to the Queen's-side: Szecsi - Szarka [Giucco Piano, C54] cr, 1987

1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4. c3 ♗f6 5. d4 exd4 6. cxd4 ♙b4+ 7. ♗c3 ♗xe4 8. O-O ♙xc3 9. d5 ♙f6 10. ♜e1 ♗e7 11. ♜xe4 d6 12. ♙g5 ♙xg5 13. ♗xg5 h6 14. ♖e2 hxg5 15. ♜e1 ♙e6 16. dxe6 f6 17. ♜e3 c6 18. ♜h3 ♜xh3 19. gxh3 g6 20. b4

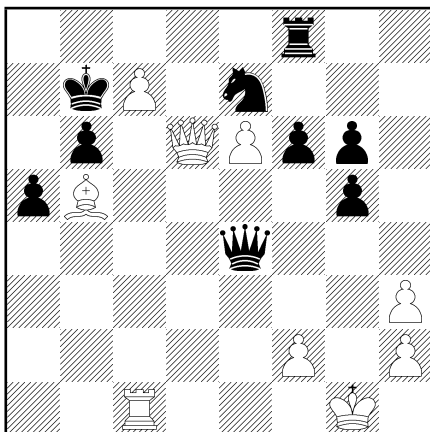


This move is quite cute: White realises Black will castle Queen's-side, and so arranges a welcome for the Black King...

20. ... ♖b6 21. ♗b2 O-O-O

Told you!

22. b5 ♖f8 23. a4 ♗a5 24. ♖c1 ♗×a4 25. b×c6 b6 26. ♘b5 ♗e4 27. c7 ♙b7 28. ♗a3 a5 29. ♗×d6



Black is cut to shreds. It's an interesting point that this was played in recent years by post, so Black had plenty of time to work out the best opening variation and the best defence to the attack!

1-0

Chapter 5

Ideas for Black

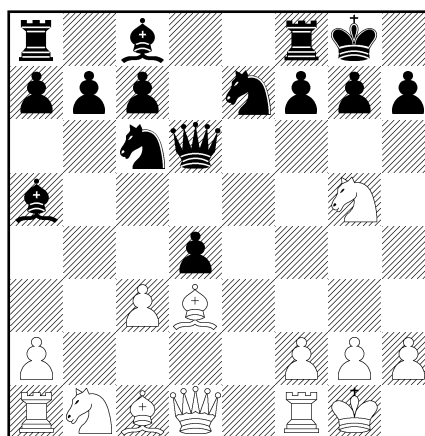
Of course, you need to know how to play the Black side of the Italian Game.

7. ... d5 8. e×d6 ♖×d6 9. O-O ♞ge7 10. ♞g5 O-O 11. ♙d3

5.1 Hit back with ...d5

This is the most important idea. Black's problems in the games we have looked at stem from (a) poor development, (b) poor control over the centre.

The ...d5 break is crucial, releasing the Bc8 and getting a share of the centre (or at least breaking up White's pawns). This goes some way to solving both problems. If you can play ...d5 as Black without immediate disaster you usually get an even game at least.

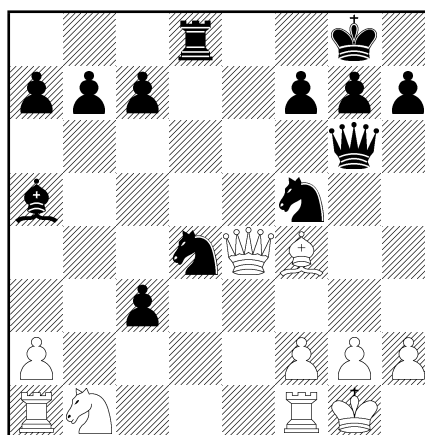
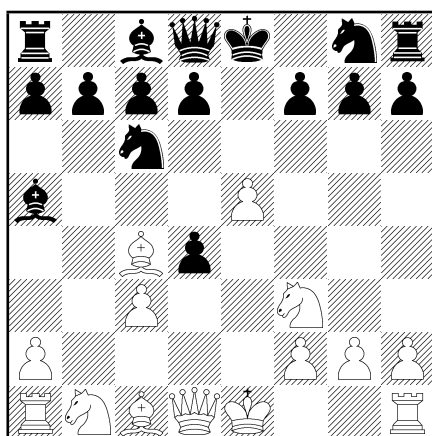


5.1.1 Black hits back with ...d5: Marache,N - Morphy,Paul [Evans' Gambit, C52] New York, 1857

1. e4 e5 2. ♞f3 ♞c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4. b4 ♙×b4 5. c3 ♙a5 6. d4 e×d4 7. e5

White has no reason to expect these attacking gestures to succeed. Black sensibly develops, connecting the Rooks, and soon moves over to the attack.

11. ... ♙f5 12. ♙×f5 ♞×f5 13. ♙a3 ♖g6 14. ♙×f8 ♖×g5 15. ♙a3 d×c3 16. ♙c1 ♖g6 17. ♙f4 ♜d8 18. ♖c2 ♞cd4 19. ♖e4

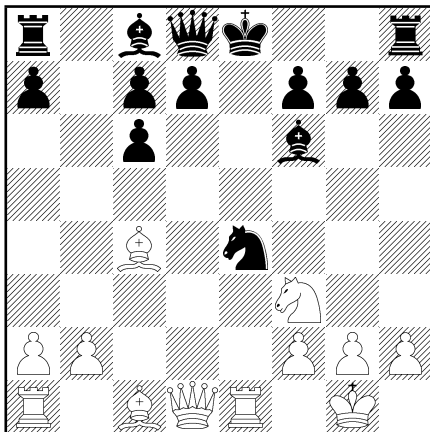
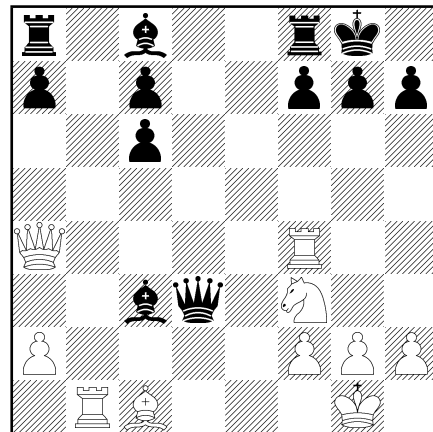


White swings a punch into the air. Black responds with one on the chin.

19. ... ♞g3! 0-1

5.1.2 Black hits back with ...d5:
 Treiber, Timo - Kurz, Ralf (07)
 [Giucoco Piano, C54] Baden
 Baden, 1990

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♗c6 3. ♖c4 ♙c5 4. c3 ♗f6
 5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♙b4+ 7. ♗c3 ♗×e4
 8. O-O ♙×c3 9. d5 ♙f6 10. d×c6 b×c6 11.
 ♖e1



White is getting into a right mess.

17. ♖bb4

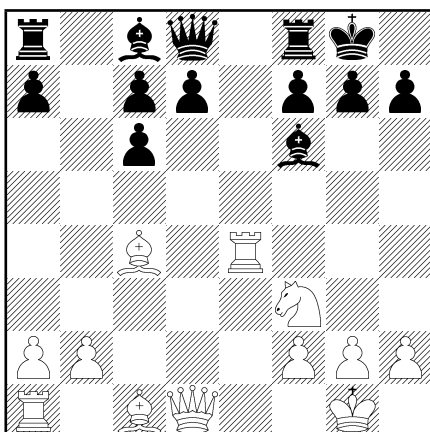
[17. ♖b3 ♖b8 18. ♖d4 ♖×b3 19. ♖×d3 ♖×b1]

17. ..., ♙a6 18. ♖bc4 ♙×c4 19. ♖×c4 ♖ab8
 0-1

Black whips the King out of the way of the Rook...

11. ..., O-O 12. ♖×e4

5.2 Catch the White King in the middle



If you are developing as fast as you can, and White isn't, you may find that you are ahead in development. In this case you have every right to attack the White King, and if this is still in the middle, so much the better!

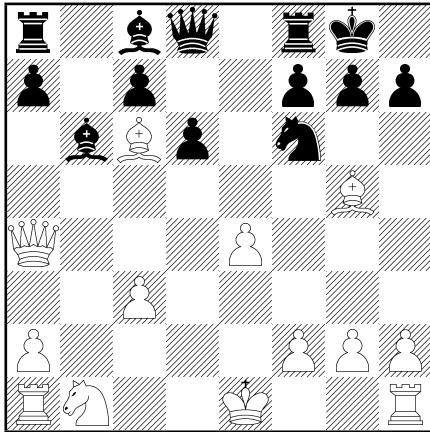
5.2.1 Black catches the King in the middle: Noa, Josef - Kopylov [Evans' Gambit, C52] Leningrad, 1937

12. ..., d5

...And the ...d5 blow recovers the piece.

13. ♖f4 d×c4 14. ♖a4 c3 15. b×c3 ♙×c3
 16. ♖b1 ♖d3

1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♖c4 ♙c5 4. b4
 ♙×b4 5. c3 ♙a5 6. d4 d6 7. ♙g5 ♗f6 8.
 ♖a4 e×d4 9. ♗×d4 ♙b6 10. ♙b5 O-O 11.
 ♗×c6 b×c6 12. ♙×c6



White has tried to cash in straight away before completing development.

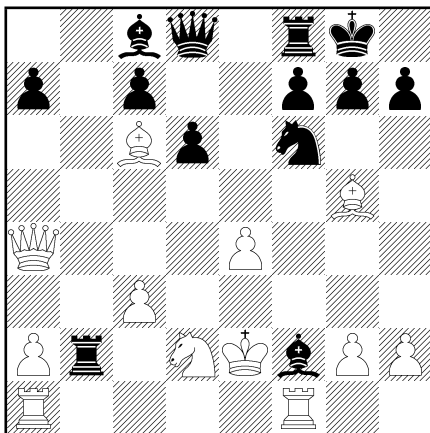
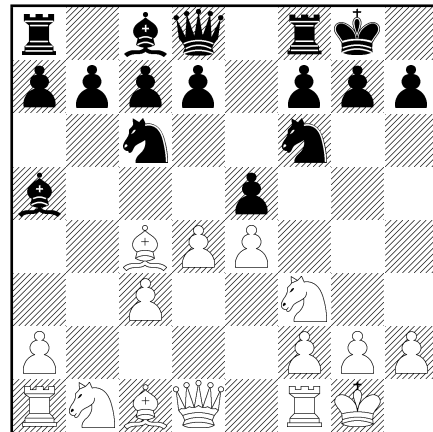
12. ... , ♕×f2+ 13. ♖e2

[13. ♖×f2 ♗g4+ 14. ♖f1 ♜×g5 15. ♕×a8 ♜c1+ 16. ♖e2 ♜×h1]

13. ... , ♜b8 14. ♜f1 ♜b2+ 15. ♗d2

5.3.1 Black's King's-side counterattack: Mongredien,A - Morphy,Paul (07) [Evans' Gambit, C52] Paris m, 1859

1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♕c4 ♕c5 4. b4 ♕×b4 5. c3 ♕a5 6. O-O ♗f6 7. d4 O-O

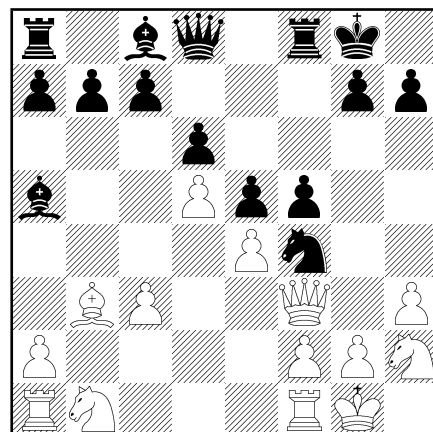


Black now finds a neat move to exploit White's loose position.

15. ... , ♗×e4! 16. ♜×e4 ♜×g5 17. ♖×f2 ♕f5 18. ♜f3 ♕g4 19. ♜e4 d5 0-1

White tries a pawn stab, but things are pretty solid. No quick raid will be possible, which is bad news for the Gambit player.

8. d5 ♗e7 9. ♜d3 d6 10. h3 ♗g6 11. ♗h2 ♗h5 12. ♕b3 ♗gf4 13. ♕×f4 ♗×f4 14. ♜f3 f5



5.3 Counterattack on the White King's-side

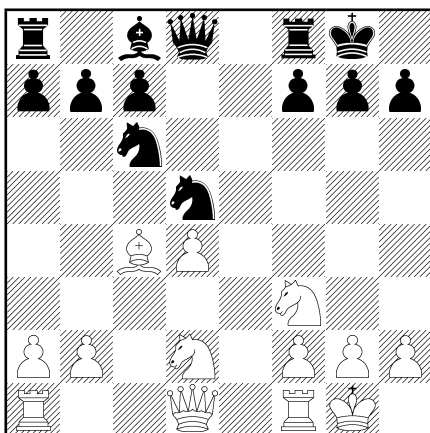
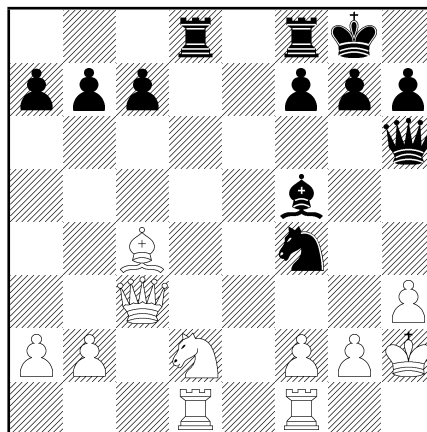
Similarly, if you are ahead in development or have some other advantage, you can (and should!) think about a King's-side attack.

This move announces to White that it is Black who holds the initiative.

15. e×f5 ♕×f5 16. g4 ♕d3 17. ♜e3 ♕b6 18. ♜d2 ♜h4 0-1

5.3.2 Black's King's-side counterattack: Saint Amant - Morphy, Paul [Giuoco Piano, C54] Paris, 1858

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4. c3 ♘f6
 5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♙b4+ 7. ♙d2 ♙×d2+
 8. ♘b×d2 d5 9. e×d5 ♘×d5 10. O-O O-O

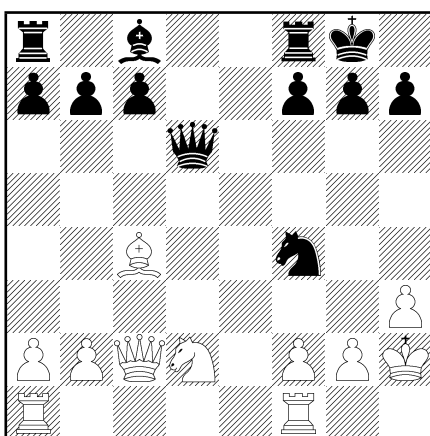


“And now for my last trick:”

18. ..., ♙×h3 19. g×h3 ♖d3 20. ♚×d3
 ♘×d3 21. ♙×d3 ♚d6+ 22. f4 ♚×d3 0-1

White follows the limp 10. O-O with a time-wasting and weakening Pawn move.

11. h3 ♘f4 12. ♚h2 ♘×d4 13. ♘×d4 ♚×d4
 14. ♚c2 ♚d6



5.4 Black's chances in the endgame

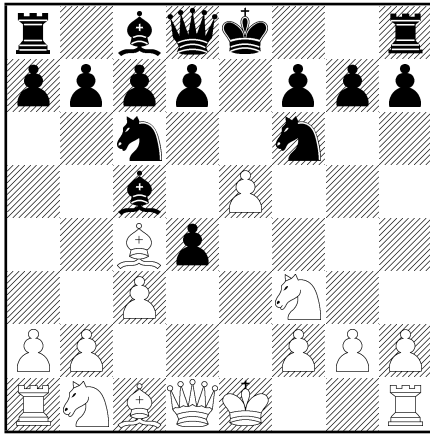
It is actually quite difficult to take over the attack and mate White. This is nearly always true if the Queens are exchanged. But very often, once White's initiative blows itself out, you may be left with better placed pieces. Then there may be open lines that you can use to attack White Pawns. White may have given up a pawn for the attack, or may have advanced one or two Pawns beyond easy reach of White's pieces, but within easy reach of yours. Then Black can look forward to a very promising endgame.

5.4.1 Black's endgame chances: Hammond, G - Morphy, Paul [Giuoco Piano, C54] New York, 1857

Threatening several nasties.

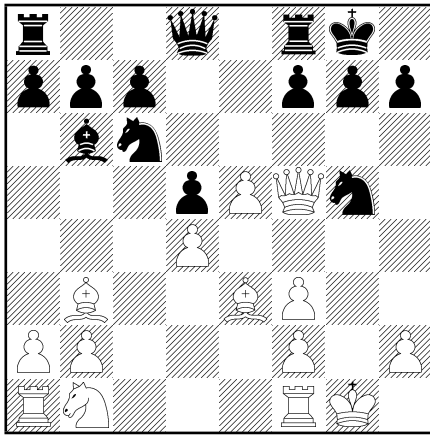
15. ♚h1 ♚h6 16. ♚c3 ♙f5 17. ♚h2 ♖ad8 18. ♖ad1

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5 4. c3 ♘f6
 5. d4 e×d4 6. e5



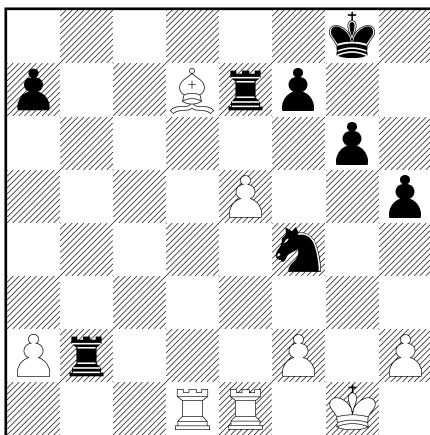
As ever, Black must hit back hard:

6. ... , d5 7. ♖b3 ♗e4 8. c×d4 ♖b6 9. O–O ♖g4 10. ♖e3 O–O 11. ♜d3 ♖×f3 12. g×f3 ♗g5 13. ♜f5



White is doing his best to attack.

13. ... , ♗×d4 14. ♖×d4 ♖×d4 15. ♗c3 g6 16. ♜g4 h5 17. ♜g2 ♖×e5 18. ♗×d5 c6 19. ♜fe1 ♜e8 20. f4 c×d5 21. f×e5 ♗e6 22. ♜×d5 ♜×d5 23. ♖×d5 ♗f4 24. ♖×b7 ♜ab8 25. ♖c6 ♜e6 26. ♖d7 ♜e7 27. ♜ad1 ♜×b2



The attack has blown out leaving Black's pieces very well placed. White is losing at least a Pawn...

28. ♜e4? ♜×d7 0-1

...if not the game!

5.5 Some traps in the Italian Game

I hope that's given you a feel for the way to play these positions. Now I'd like to look at some specific variations, because in these lively lines you have to watch your step! Here are some of the most important traps, the tactical ideas behind some of the main lines.

These are taken 'wholemeal' (rather than piece-meal) from Znosko-Borovsky's *Traps on the Chessboard*. I think this is out of print (I have a 1940s copy) but worth trying to find if you read *descriptive notation*. In fact, that goes for all Z-B's books! Many of them are issued in inexpensive editions by Dover.

5.5.1 A poor line for White in the Closed Variation of the Giuoco Piano

1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. c3 ♜e7 5. O–O?!

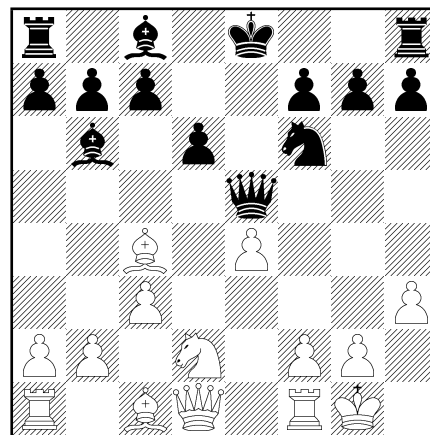
[5. d4 is best]

5. ... , d6 6. d4 ♖b6 7. h3 ♗f6 8. d×e5?!

Just because your opponent plays slowly doesn't mean you can relax.

[8. d5 may have been better]

8. ... , ♗×e5 9. ♗×e5 ♜×e5 10. ♗d2



White has done everything possible to encourage Black!

10. ..., ♖×h3 11. g×h3 ♖g3+ 12. ♔h1 ♖×h3+ 13. ♔g1 ♖g4 14. ♖f3 ♖g3+ 15. ♔h1 ♖×f2

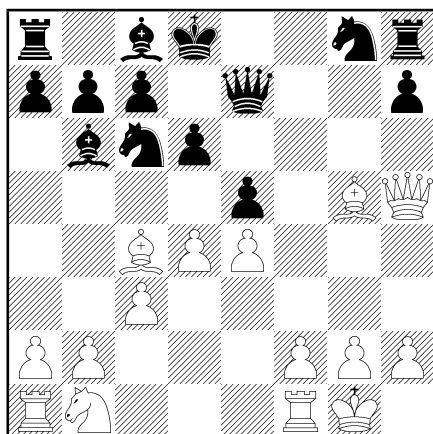
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5.5.2 Another trap in the Closed Variation of the Giuoco Piano

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. c3 ♖e7 5. O-O?! d6 6. d4 ♖b6 7. ♖g5 f6?! 8. ♖h4 g5?! 9. ♖×g5 f×g5

I said above that you usually can't afford to do this in front of your castled King. It's also not safe in front of your uncastled King!

10. ♖h5+ ♔d8 11. ♖×g5

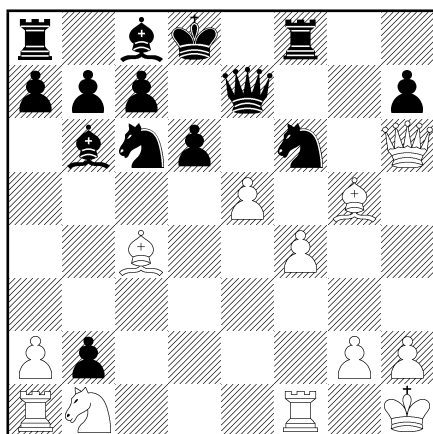


Is White's attack worth a piece?

11. ..., ♖f6 12. ♖h6 ♖f8 13. f4 e×d4

Else White fatally opens the f-file.

14. e5! d×c3+ 15. ♔h1 c×b2



16. e×f6 ♖×f6 17. ♖×f6 b×a1=♖ 18. ♖×a1+-

5.5.3 Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. O-O

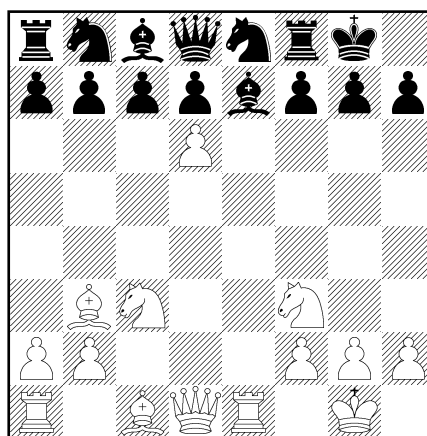
1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. c3 ♖f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. O-O

White sometimes plays this uncommon alternative to avoid the main lines after 6. c×d4.

6. ..., ♖×e4?

[6. ..., d6]

7. c×d4 ♖e7 8. d5 ♖b8 9. ♖e1 ♖d6 10. ♖b3 O-O 11. ♖c3 ♖e8 12. d6



A very clever move.

12. ..., c×d6

[12. ..., ♖×d6 13. ♖g5 ♖f6 14. ♖d5 ♖c6 15. ♖×f6+ g×f6 16. ♖h6+-]

[12. ..., ♖×d6 13. ♖×e7 ♖×e7 14. ♖g5 ♖e8 15. ♖d3 ♖c6 16. ♖e1+-]

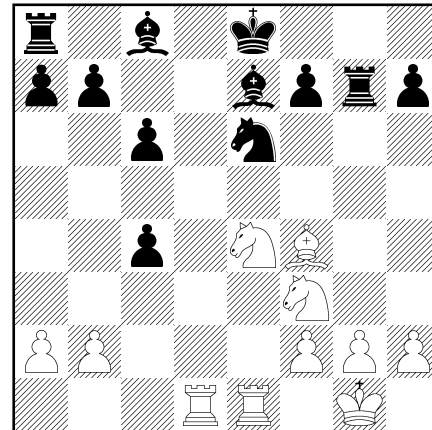
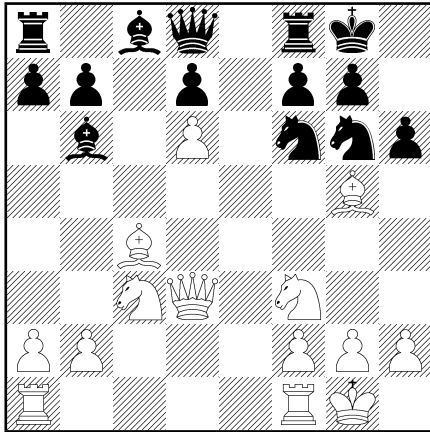
13. ♖×e7 ♖×e7 14. ♖g5 ♖f6 15. ♖d5 ♖d8 16. ♖d4 ♖c6 17. ♖h4+-

5.5.4 Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. O-O

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. c3 ♖f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. O-O O-O?

[again, 6. ..., d6 is most reliable]

7. c×d4 ♖b6 8. d5 ♖e7 9. e5 ♖e8 10. d6 c×d6 11. e×d6 ♖g6 12. ♖g5 ♖f6 13. ♖c3 h6 14. ♖d3



A terrific example of the central pawn raid.

14. ..., ♖h7

[14. ..., h×g5 15. ♖×g6]

15. ♗×f7! ♜×f7 16. ♘e5 h×g5 17. ♖×g6+ ♔g8 18. ♖×f7+ +-

could you win from here as White? Black cannot afford to play

15. ..., ♘×f4

because of

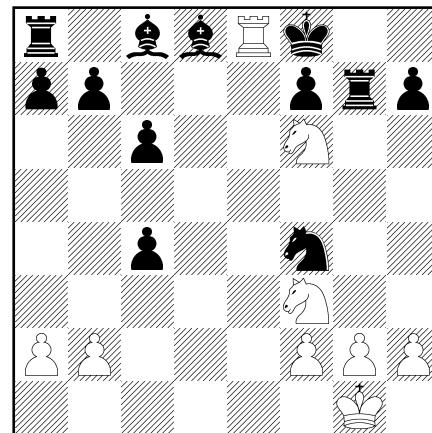
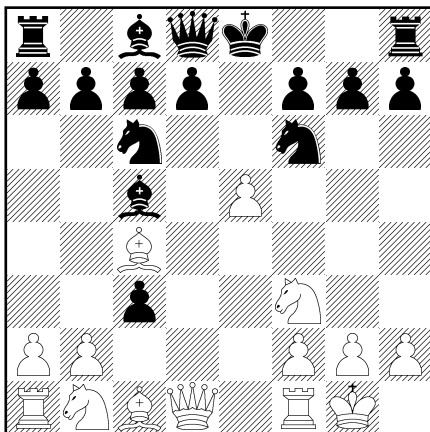
16. ♘f6+ ♔f8 17. ♜d8+ ♗×d8 18. ♜e8#

5.5.5 Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. O-O

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. c3 ♘f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. O-O d×c3

A little greedy.

7. e5

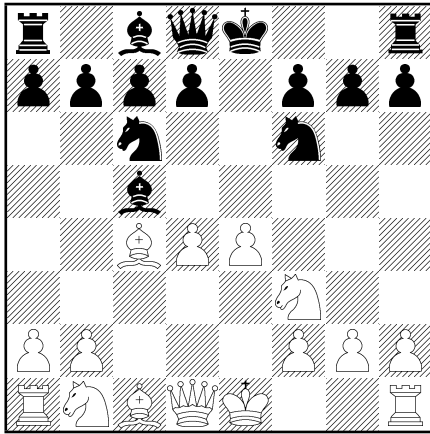


Black's next is often the right idea, but doesn't work here because of the lag in development and castling.

7. ..., d5 8. e×f6 d×c4 9. ♖×d8+ ♘×d8 10. f×g7 ♜g8 11. ♘×c3 ♜×g7 12. ♗f4 ♘e6 13. ♜fe1 c6 14. ♘e4 ♗e7 15. ♜ad1+/-

5.5.6 Trap in the Main Line of the Giuoco Piano with 6. cxd4

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 ♗c5 4. c3 ♘f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4



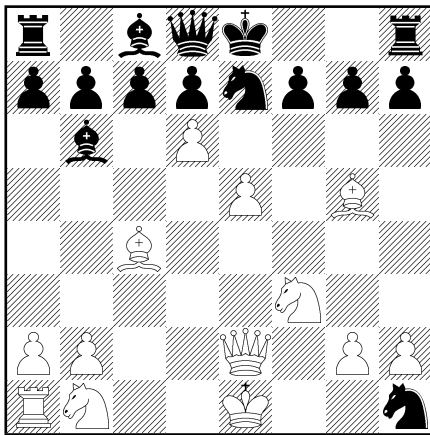
This is the normal continuation.

6. ..., ♖b6?

This isn't! The Pawns push forward.

[6. ..., ♖b4+ is best]

7. d5 ♗e7 8. e5 ♗e4 9. d6 ♗×f2 10. ♖e2 ♗×h1 11. ♖g5



11. ..., ♖f2+

Black intends to get the Queen out via c7

12. ♔d1!

[12. ♔f1 ♗f5 13. ♖×d8

[or 13. ♖e4 ♗hg3+ 14. ♔×f2 ♗×e4+ 15. ♖e1 ♗×g5-+]

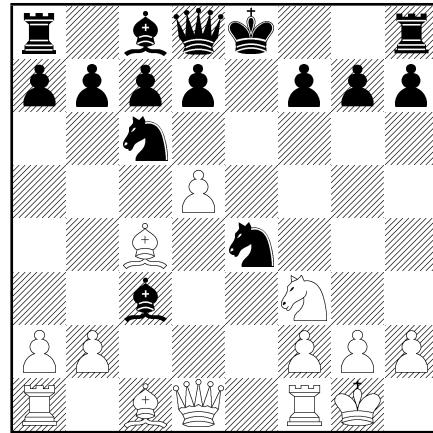
13. ..., ♗e3+ 14. ♖×e3 ♖×e3-/+ and Black is in the clear]

12. ..., c5 13. ♖×e7 ♖b6 14. ♗g5 ♖f8 15. ♖h5 g6 16. ♖×h7+-

5.5.7 Trap in the Moller Attack

1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. c3 ♗f6

5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♖b4+ 7. ♗c3 ♗×e4 8. O-O ♖×c3 9. d5



The Moller Attack

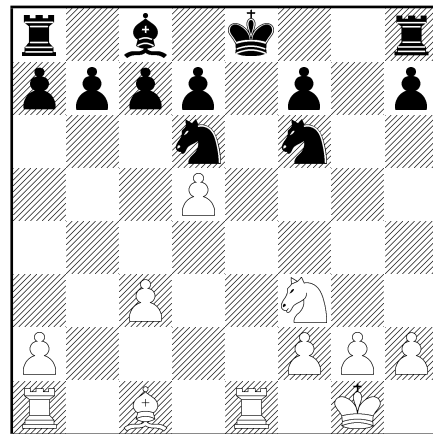
9. ..., ♗e5?!

[9. ..., ♖f6!]

10. b×c3 ♗×c4 11. ♖d4 ♗cd6?

[11. ..., f5]

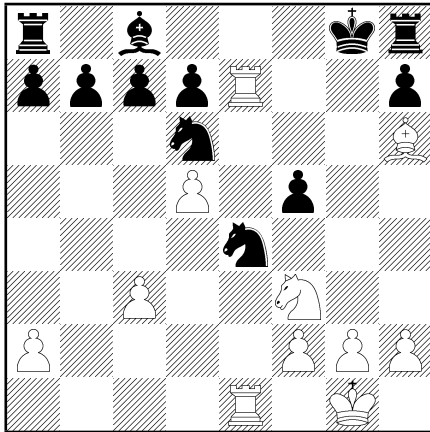
12. ♖×g7 ♖f6 13. ♖×f6 ♗×f6 14. ♖e1+



14. ..., ♔f8

[14. ..., ♔d8 15. ♖g5 ♗de8 16. ♖×e8+ ♔×e8 17. ♖e1+! ♔f8 18. ♖h6+ ♔g8 19. ♖e5 d6 20. ♖g5#]

15. ♖h6+ ♔g8 16. ♖e5 ♗fe4 17. ♖e1 f5 18. ♖e7+-

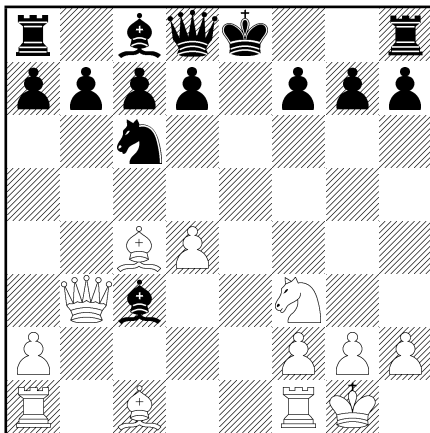


“and wins”, says Znosko-Borovsky. Have a go!

18. ... , a5 19. ♖d4 b5 20. f3 ♗×c3 21. ♜g7+ ♘f8 22. ♜×d7+ ♘g8 23. ♜g7+ ♘f8 24. ♜×c7+ ♘g8 25. ♜g7+ ♘f8 26. ♜a7+ ♘g8 27. ♜×a8 +-

5.5.8 Bernstein’s Trap in the Moller Attack

1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♘c4 ♘c5 4. c3 ♗f6 5. d4 e×d4 6. c×d4 ♘b4+ 7. ♗c3 ♗×e4 8. O-O ♗×c3 9. b×c3 ♘×c3 10. ♚b3



10. ... , ♘×a1?

Black is being terribly greedy.

[10. ... , d5 11. ♘×d5 O-O 12. ♘×f7+ ♘h8 13. ♚×c3 ♜×f7 14. ♗e5 ♗×e5 15. d×e5 ♘e6]

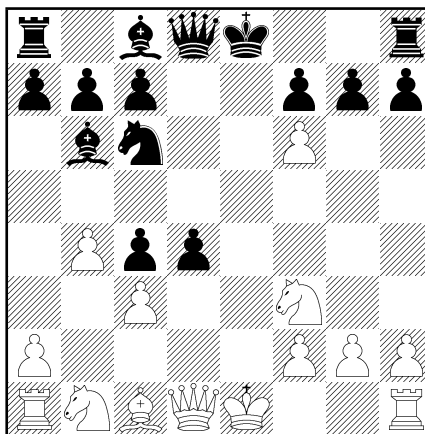
11. ♘×f7+ ♘f8 12. ♘g5 ♗e7 13. ♗e5 ♘×d4 14. ♘g6 d5 15. ♚f3+ ♘f5 16. ♘×f5 ♘×e5 17. ♘e6+ ♘f6 18. ♘×f6+-

Chapter 6

Some Variations in the Italian Game

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♙c4 ♙c5

We will look at the Giuoco Piano with 4.c3, and Evans' Gambit with 4. b4.



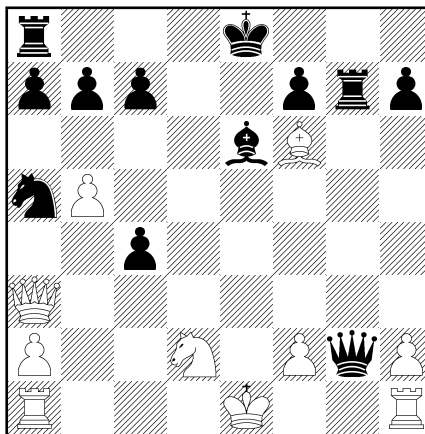
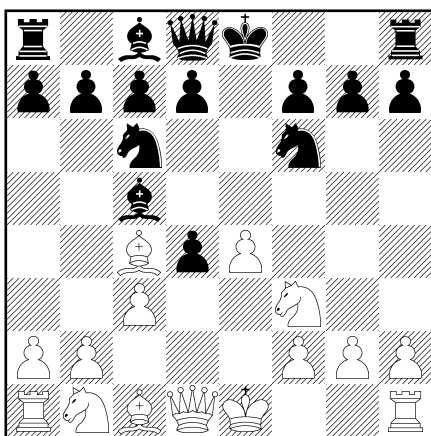
6.1 Main line Giuoco Piano 4. c3

4. ..., ♗f6

The alternatives 4. ..., ♙b6, and 4. ..., d6 give White a free hand. We'll have a look at 4. ..., ♙b6, the Closed Variation in section B later.

5. d4 e×d4

For example 9. b5 ♘a5 10. ♚e2+ ♙e6 11. f×g7 ♚g8 12. ♘×d4 ♙×d4 13. c×d4 ♚×d4 14. ♙b2 ♚d3 15. ♙f6 ♚g6 16. ♚f3 ♚×g7 17. ♘d2 ♚×g2 18. ♚a3



6. c×d4

White has alternatives:

[6. e5 d5 is no good]

[You might try one day 6. b4 ♙b6 7. e5 d5 8. e×f6 d×c4

which is wonderfully messy]

[Lastly, White has 6. O–O hoping for 6. ..., d×c3 7. ♘×c3 with a big lead in development. There are examples of this line in the section on Traps, but it is neglected in many books on the opening]

After 6. c×d4 Black must reply

6. ..., ♙b4+

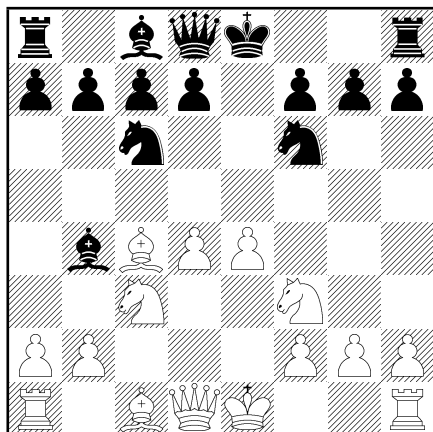
[6. ..., ♖b6 does nothing to slow White's plan - see the game by Boleslavsky in the ideas section if you are not convinced!]

Now White can play the risky 7. ♘c3 or the safe 7. ♕d2.

For example: 16. ♖ac1 c6 17. d5 cxd5 18. ♘d4 ♘f7 19. ♘e6 ♖hc8 20. ♗g4 g6 21. ♘g5+ ♘e8 22. ♖xe7+ ♘f8 23. ♖f7+ ♘g8 24. ♖g7+ ♘h8 25. ♖xh7+ ♘g8 26. ♖g7+ ♘h8 27. ♗h4+ ♘g7 28. ♗h7+ ♘f8 29. ♗h8+ ♘e7 30. ♗g7+ ♘e8 31. ♗g8+ ♘e7 32. ♗f7+ ♘d8 33. ♗f8+ ♘e8 34. ♘f7+ ♘d7 35. ♗d6#

6.1.1 Risky main line 7. Nc3

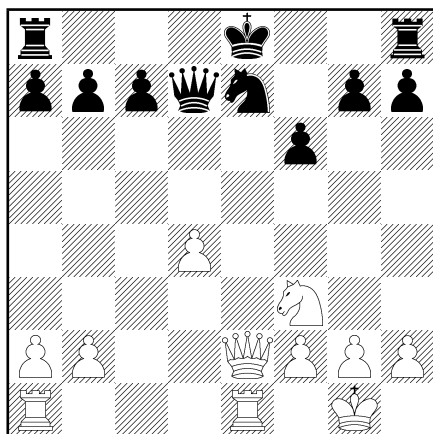
7. ♘c3



7. ..., ♘x e4

[Instead 7. ..., d5 can be tried, which is probably not as good: e.g.

8. exd5 ♘xd5 9. O-O ♕e6 10. ♕g5 ♕e7 11. ♕xd5 ♕xd5 12. ♘xd5 ♗xd5 13. ♕xe7 ♘xe7 14. ♖e1 f6 15. ♗e2 ♗d7

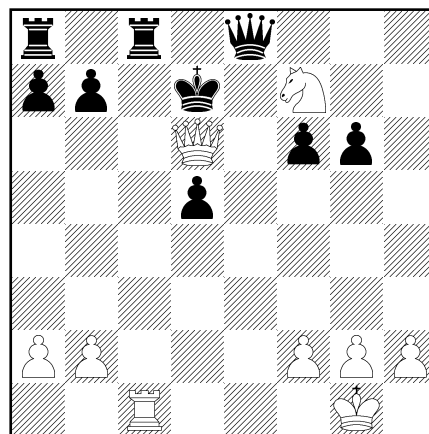


Black's King is caught in the centre, and cannot easily leave.

Now White can try either:

16. ♗e4 or

16. ♖ac1



An attractive 'swallowtail mate' in a game which Fritz produced from memory]

White continues in bold style with

8. O-O

Black has a further choice:

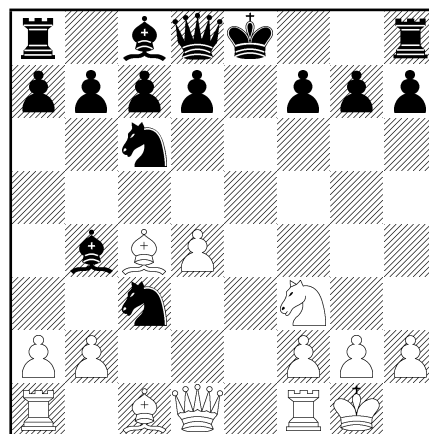
8. ..., ♕xc3, the Moller attack

8. ..., ♘xc3, avoiding the Moller

We'll look at the avoiding line first, as it's such a good example of how quickly White can win in the Giuoco Piano.

Black avoids the Moller

8. ..., ♘xc3



White has to play

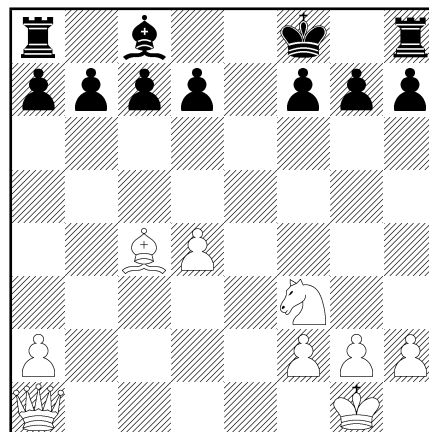
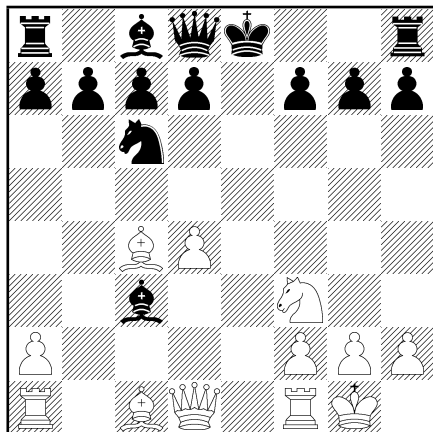
9. bxc3

when Black has another choice

Greedy 9. ... , ♙xc3

Safer 9. ... , d5

Bernstein's line: greedy 9. ... , ♙xc3



with extra material, and White's attack is far from over. Black must back out earlier.

10. ... , d6

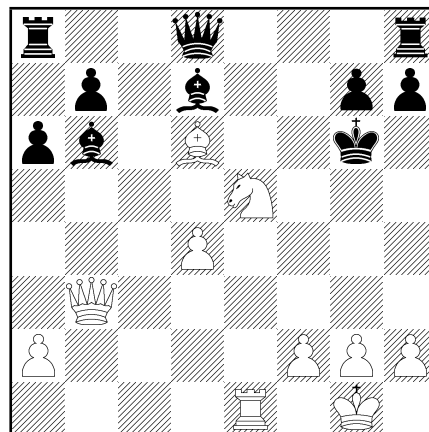
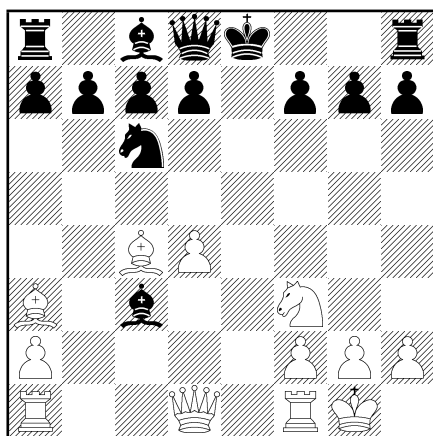
is also insufficient

11. ♖c1 ♙a5 12. ♗a4 a6 13. ♙d5 ♙b6
14. ♗xc6 ♙d7 15. ♗e1+ ♔f8 16. ♗xd6
cxd6 17. ♙xd6+ ♔g8 18. ♙xf7+ ♔xf7 19.
♗b3+ ♔g6 20. ♘e5+

Reply

10. ♙a3

[10. ♗b3 is also fun: see the Traps section]



This is Bernstein's line, and Black no longer has a satisfactory reply. When I came across this line as a junior I fell in love with it, and always tried to play it.

The most important one to deal with is the most obvious:

10. ... , ♙xa1

11. ♖e1+ ♘e7 12. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 13. ♗xe7+ ♔xe7 14. ♗e1+ ♔f8 15. ♗xa1

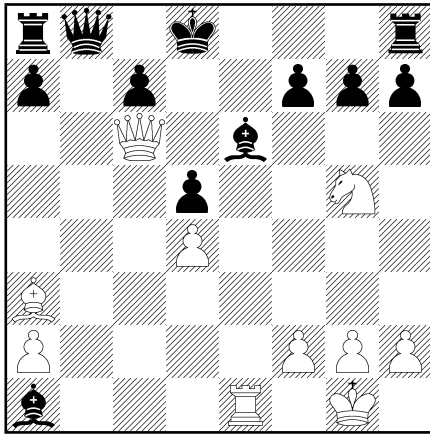
20. ... , ♔f6 [20. ... , ♔h5 21. ♗f3+ ♔h6 22. ♘f7+ ♔g6 23. ♘xd8 ♙xd8 24. ♗xb7]

21. ♗f7+ ♔g5 22. ♗xg7+ ♔h5 23. g4+ ♙xg4 24. ♗xg4+ ♔h6 25. ♘f7#

10. ... , d5

Often a good idea but here is no good either:

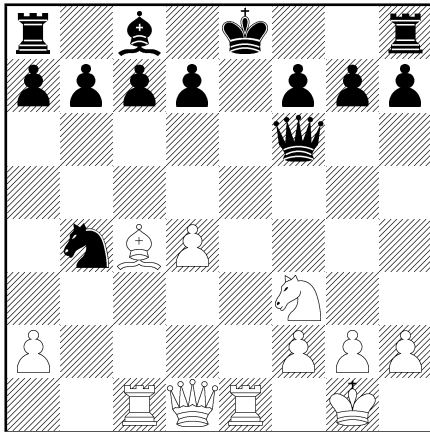
11. ♙b5 ♙xa1 12. ♖e1+ ♙e6 13. ♗a4 ♗c8
14. ♙xc6+ bxc6 15. ♗xc6+ ♔d8 16. ♘g5
♗b8



10. ..., ♖f6

Not even close

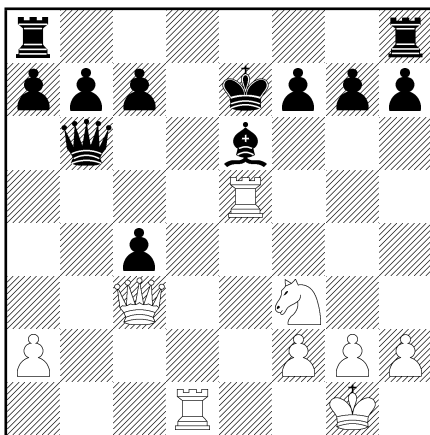
11. ♜c1 ♙b4 12. ♙×b4 ♞×b4 13. ♜e1+



10. ..., ♞e7

best: the game might go

11. ♖b3 d5 12. ♖×c3 d×c4 13. ♜fe1 ♙e6
 14. ♙×e7 ♙×e7 15. d5 ♖×d5 16. ♜ad1 ♖c5
 17. ♜e5 ♖b6

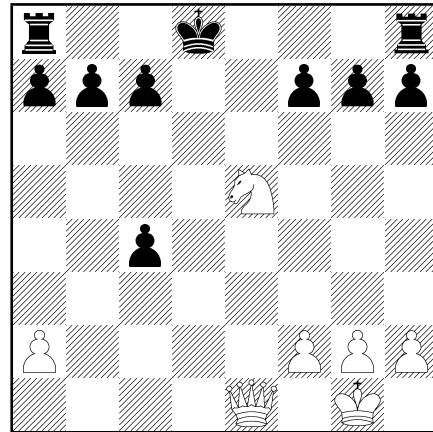


White now can finish nicely:

18. ♜×e6+ ♖×e6

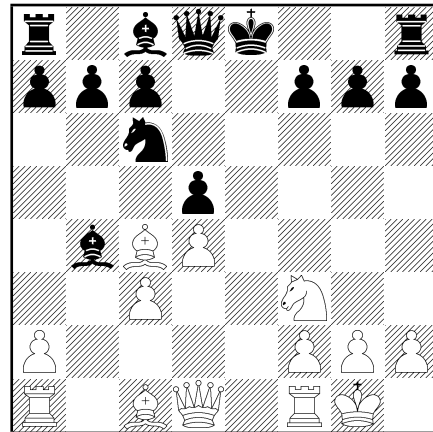
else Qxg7+ is terrible

19. ♜e1 ♖×e1+ 20. ♖×e1+ ♙d8 21. ♞e5



when White should be able to handle the Pawns, which lack support from the Rooks.

Bernstein: the safer 9. ..., d5

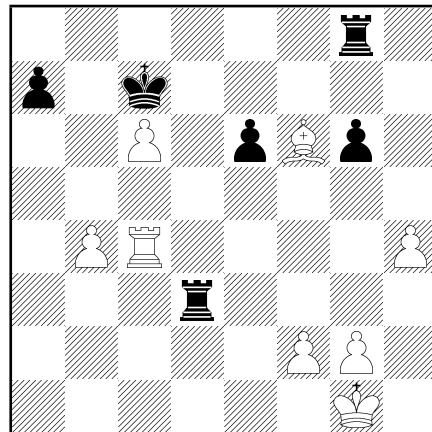
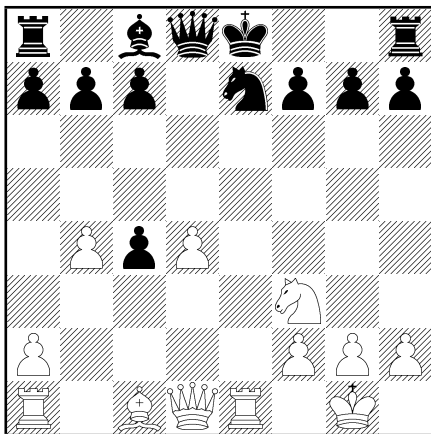


This may be really where Black should back out.

10. c×b4 d×c4 11. ♜e1+

[A safer line for White here is 11. b5 ♞e7 12. ♙a3 O-O 13. ♖e2 ♜e8 14. ♖×c4]

11. ..., ♞e7



White's exchange deficit is compensated by the pawns

If you don't fancy this you can always play 11.b5.

Moller attack

8. ..., ♖×c3

Now the key reply is 9. d5, although we will look at 9. b×c3 below.

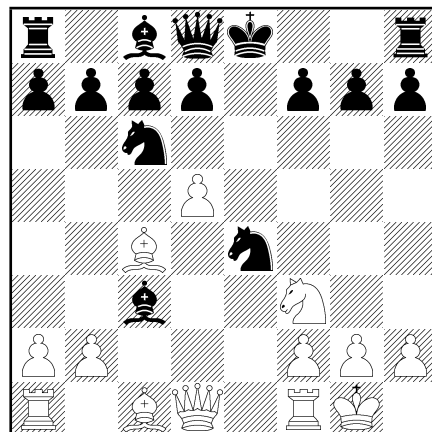
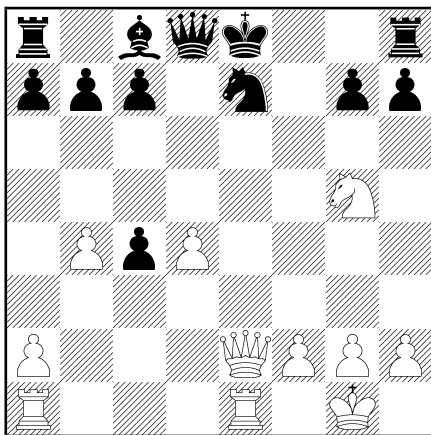
9. d5

12. ♖e2

[John Walker suggests the piece sacrifice with 12. ♖g5 f6

[not 12. ..., ♖e6 13. ♖×e7 ♖×e7 14. d5]

13. ♖e2 f×g5 14. ♖×g5



9. ..., ♖f6

Neither

[9. ..., ♖a5 ?]

nor

[9. ..., ♖d6 ?]

are any good.

[9. ..., ♖e5 is better, but after 10. b×c3 ♖×c4 11. ♖d4 f5 Keene and Levy give 12. ♖×c4 d6 13. ♖d4 O-O 14. f3 ♖c5 with advantage

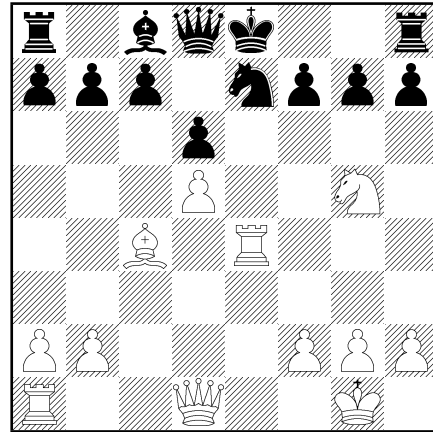
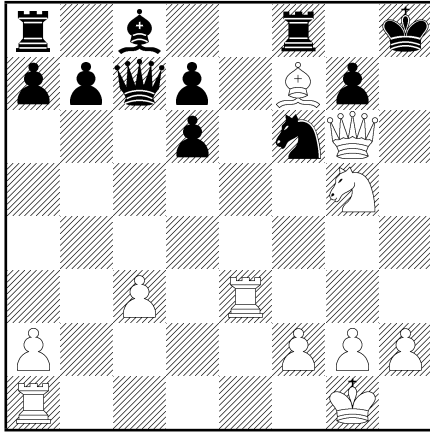
(Alert and anxious reader: "What about 11. ..., ♖cd6? What about 11. ..., O-O?" What indeed?)]

...which certainly puts Black under pressure, but it's not my style.]

After 12. ♖e2 Fritz wanted to play out a game it knew about, which ran:

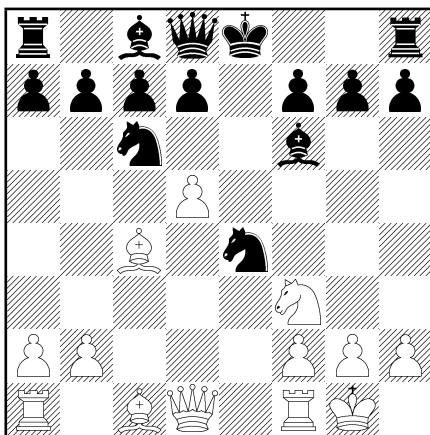
12. ..., ♖e6 13. ♖g5 ♖d7 14. ♖e5 c6 15. ♖×g7 O-O-O 16. ♖e5 ♖d5 17. ♖f6 ♖g6 18. h4 ♖hg8 19. ♖×g6 h×g6 20. ♖ac1 b5 21. a4 ♖×d4 22. a×b5 ♖×f6 23. ♖×f6 ♖d3 24. b×c6 ♖c7 25. ♖×e6 f×e6 26. ♖×c4

[And after 9. ..., ♞e7 White continues logically
 10. bxc3 O-O 11. ♖e1 ♞f6 12. ♙g5 ♞g6 13.
 d6 h6 14. ♗d3 h×g5 15. ♖×g6 c×d6 16. ♞×g5
 ♗c7 17. ♙×f7+ ♚h8 18. ♖e3



winning]

After 9. ..., ♙f6, the only try is



10. ♖e1

[If 10. dxc6 bxc6 11. ♖e1 Black can continue
 11. ..., O-O 12. ♖×e4 d5 13. ♖f4 dxc4 14.
 ♗a4 c3 15. bxc3 ♙xc3 16. ♖b1 ♗d3 17. ♖bb4
 ♙a6 18. ♖bc4 ♙xc4 19. ♖xc4 ♖ab8 -+]

10. ..., ♞e7 11. ♖×e4 d6 12. ♙g5 ♙×g5 13.
 ♞×g5

13. ..., O-O

[BCO reckons a better line is 13. ..., h6 14. ♗h5
 O-O 15. ♖ae1 ♞f5 16. ♞×f7

[16. ♞e6 f×e6 17. d×e6 ♞e7 -+ BCO2]

16. ..., ♗f6 Zak]

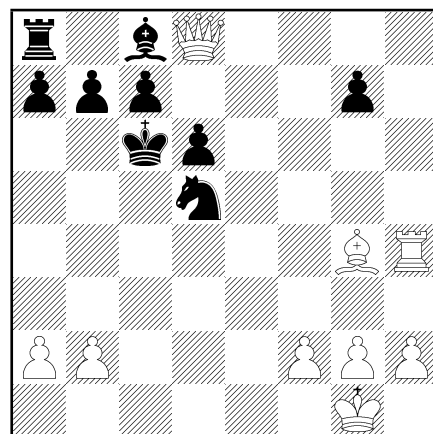
14. ♞×h7 ♚×h7

[or 14. ..., ♙f5 15. ♖h4=]

15. ♗h5+ ♚g8 16. ♖h4 f5 17. ♖e1 ♖e8

[We saw ...Ng6 in the Traps section above]

18. ♖e6 ♚f8 19. ♙e2 ♞×d5 20. ♗×f5+ ♚g8
 21. ♗h7+ ♚f7 22. ♖×e8 ♚×e8 23. ♗g8+
 ♚d7 24. ♙g4+ ♚c6 25. ♗×d8 winning

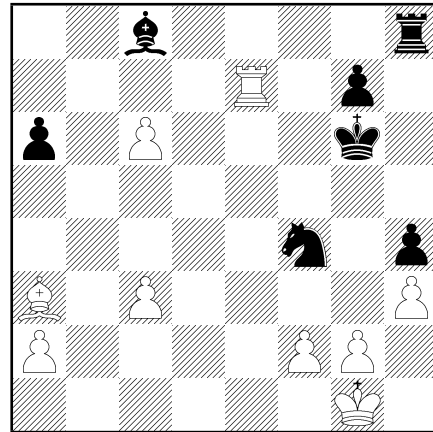
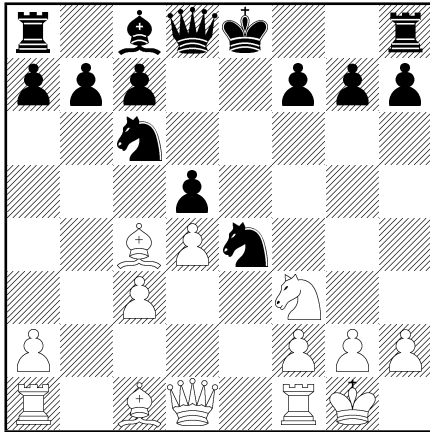


If this is all a bit much, White can go instead

9. bxc3

when 9. ..., d5

is OK for Black.



White is still ahead in development but Black still has a pawn. At Grandmaster level they have given up on this line, thinking White cannot get enough of an attack going. At club level, though, there may be enough meat left to chew.

when White has enough pawns to account for the piece, but their scattered placing makes it hard to play for a win.

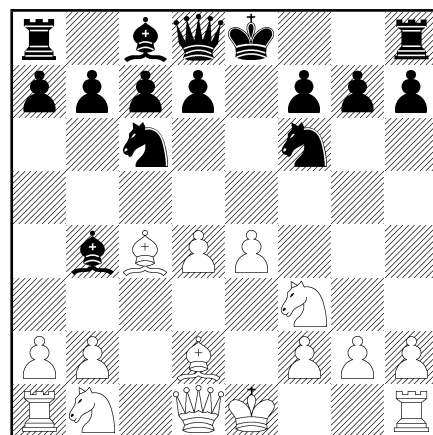
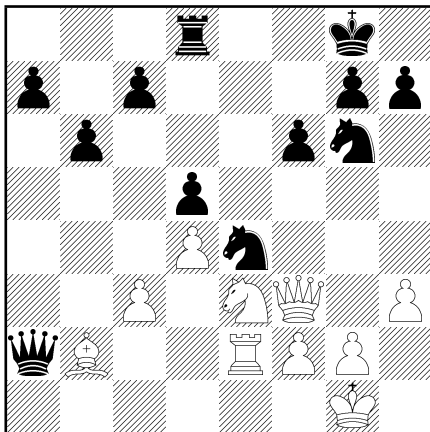
Let's look at two example lines, to see how games might go.

If you are not convinced by any of these lines (and while they are worth a punt in practice the theory is against them) you can always play safe on move 7. So let's look at that next.

10. $\text{♙}b5$ $O-O$ 11. $\text{♚}c2$ $\text{♜}f5$ 12. $\text{♜}d3$ $\text{♜}g6$ 13. $\text{♜}b1$ $\text{♞}d6$ 14. $\text{♜}a3$ $b6$ 15. $\text{♞}e5$ $\text{♜} \times d3$ 16. $\text{♚} \times d3$ $\text{♞}e7$ 17. $\text{♜}fe1$ $f6$ 18. $\text{♞}g4$ $\text{♚}d7$ 19. $\text{♚}h3$ $\text{♜}ad8$ 20. $\text{♜}b2$ $\text{♞}g6$ 21. $\text{♚}f3$ $\text{♜}fe8$ 22. $\text{♜}be2$ $\text{♜} \times e2$ 23. $\text{♜} \times e2$ $\text{♞}e4$ 24. $h3$ $\text{♚}a4$ 25. $\text{♜}b2$ $\text{♚} \times a2$ 26. $\text{♞}e3$

6.1.2 Safe main line 7. Bd2

7. $\text{♜}d2$



when it has all gone minty for White.

So White can try instead

7. ..., $\text{♜} \times d2+$ 8. $\text{♞}b \times d2$ $d5$

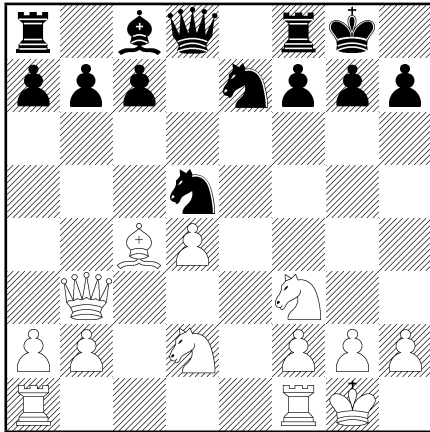
10. $\text{♜}e3$ $d \times c4$ 11. $\text{♜}e1$ $f5$ 12. $\text{♞}d2$ $\text{♞}f7$ 13. $\text{♞} \times e4$ $f \times e4$ 14. $\text{♜} \times e4$ $\text{♚}f6$ 15. $\text{♚}e2$ $\text{♜}f5$ 16. $\text{♚} \times c4+$ $\text{♞}g6$ 17. $\text{♜}e3$ $\text{♜}ae8$ 18. $\text{♜}ae1$ $\text{♜} \times e3$ 19. $\text{♜} \times e3$ $h5$ 20. $h3$ $h4$ 21. $d5$ $\text{♞}e5$ 22. $\text{♚} \times c7$ $\text{♞}d3$ 23. $\text{♚} \times b7$ $\text{♜}c8$ 24. $\text{♚}c6$ $\text{♚} \times c6$ 25. $d \times c6$ $\text{♞}f4$ 26. $\text{♜}e7$ $a6$

Of course.

9. $e \times d5$ $\text{♞} \times d5$

[A solid line is 10. $O-O$ $O-O$ 11. $\text{♞}b3$]

10. $\text{♚}b3$ $\text{♞}ce7$ 11. $O-O$ $O-O$



White has several alternatives in this well-known position:

[12. Nf5]

[12. Nf4]

[12. Qxd5]

[12. Rae1]

[12. Rfe1]

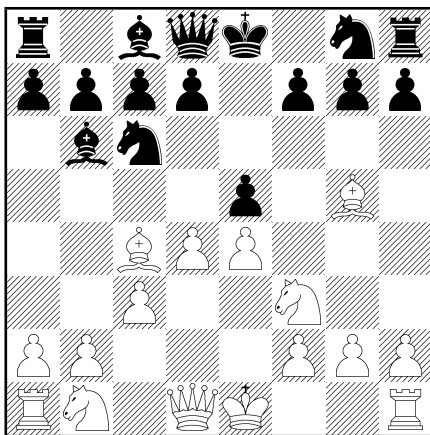
For an example of 12. Rfe1 see the games section.

6.1.3 The closed variation 4...Bb6

4. ..., Qb6 5. d4 Re7

[6. O-O+ is good enough, but try instead...]

6. Qg5

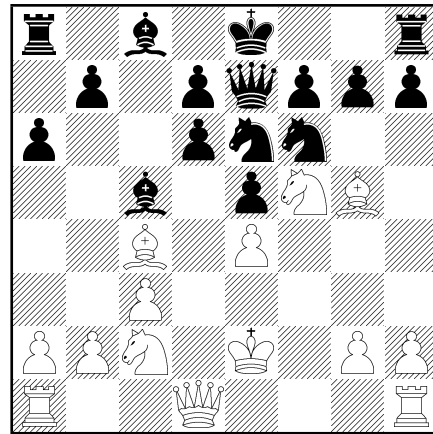


This continuation was discovered by Jonathan Mestel and helped him win the UK Championship in 1975. Of course, Black doesn't want to weaken the King's-side with ...f6, when Nxe5 looks very dangerous.

6. ..., Qf6 7. d5 Qd8 8. d6 cxd6

The capture with 8. ..., Qxd6 9. Qxd6 cxd6 is no safer for Black.

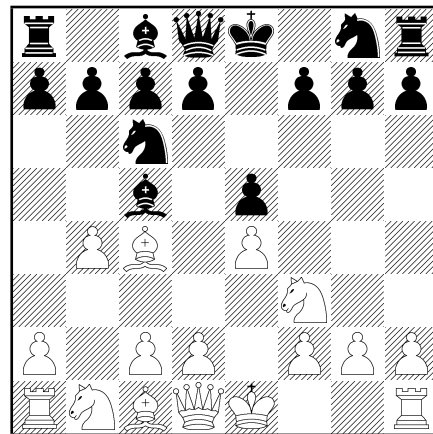
9. Na3 a6 10. Nc2 Qxf2+ 11. Ke2 Qc5 12. Qh4 Qe6 13. Qf5 +-



Mestel-Doyle '75; White has a large positional advantage and may be winning.

6.2 Evans' Gambit 4. b4

4. b4



6.2.1 Evans' Gambit Declined (4...Bb6)

4. ..., Qb6

The best way to refute a gambit is to accept it.

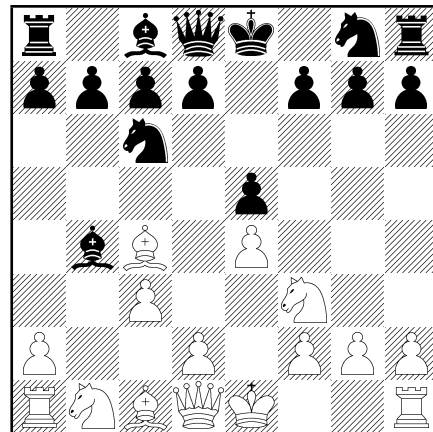
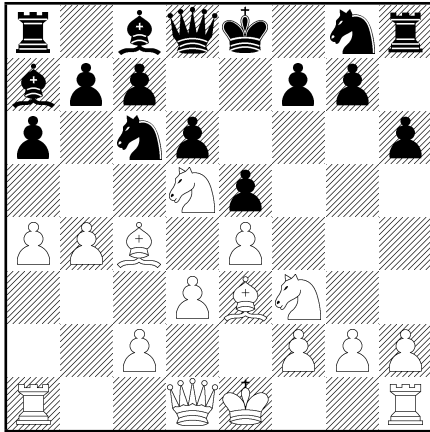
5. a4 a6 6. Nc3 d6

[6. ..., Qf6 7. Qd5 Qxd5 8. exd5 e4 9. dxc6 exf3 10. Qxf3 Qe7+ 11. Qd1 dxc6 12. Re1 Qe6 13. Qb2 +=/+- estrin]

7. ♖d5 ♗a7 8. d3 h6

[8. ... , ♗ce7 Fritz]

9. ♗e3 +=



Black has three choices:

5. ... , ♗a5

5. ... , ♗c5

5. ... , ♗e7

Evans' Gambit with 5. ... , ♗c5

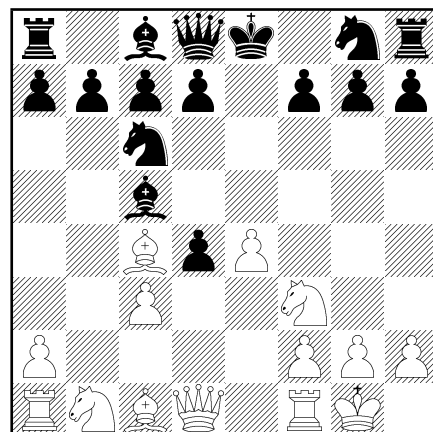
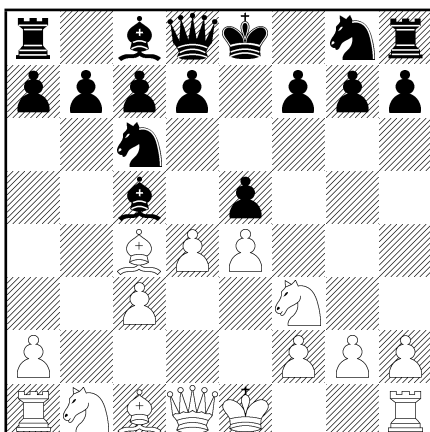
5. ... , ♗c5 6. d4 e×d4 7. O-O

With an edge for White - Panov/Estrin]

6.2.2 Evans' Gambit Accepted (4...Bxb4)

4. ... , ♗×b4

[If instead 4. ... , ♗×b4 5. c3 ♗c6 6. d4



7. ... , d6

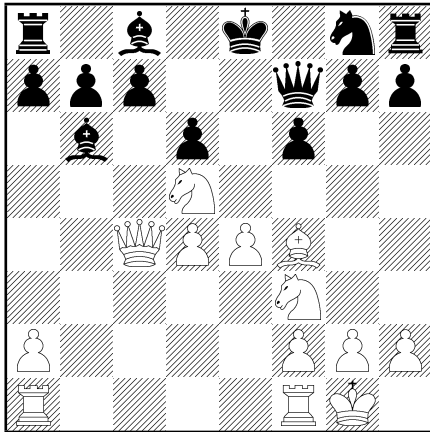
[7. ... , d3 8. ♗g5 ♗h6 9. ♗×f7 +- BCO2 9. ... , ♗×f7 10. ♖h5]

8. c×d4 ♗b6 9. ♗c3 ♗a5 10. ♗g5 ♗e7

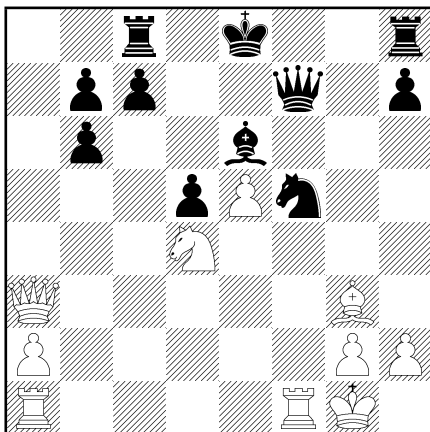
[10. ... , f6 11. ♗f4 ♗×c4 12. ♖a4+ ♖d7 13. ♖×c4 ♖f7 14. ♗d5

transposes to the 5. ... , ♗c5 variation]

5. c3



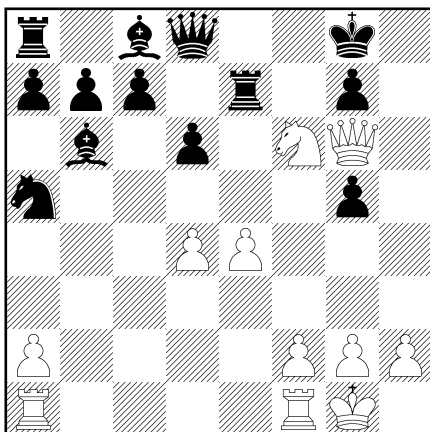
14. ... , g5 15. ♖g3 ♗e6 16. ♖a4+ ♗d7 17. ♖a3 ♗c8 18. ♗fe1 g4 19. ♗×b6 a×b6 20. ♗d2 ♗e6 21. f4 g×f3 22. ♗×f3 ♗e7 23. e5 f×e5 24. d×e5 d5 25. ♗f1 ♗f5 26. ♗d4



when it's still awkward for Black

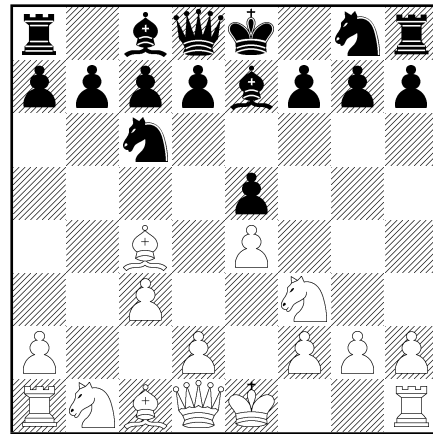
Now an old analysis goes:

11. ♗×f7+ ♖×f7 12. ♗d5 ♗e8 13. ♗×e7 ♗×e7 14. ♗g5+ ♖g8 15. ♖h5 h6 16. ♖g6 h×g5 17. ♗f6+ ♖f8 18. ♗h7+ ♖g8 19. ♗f6+



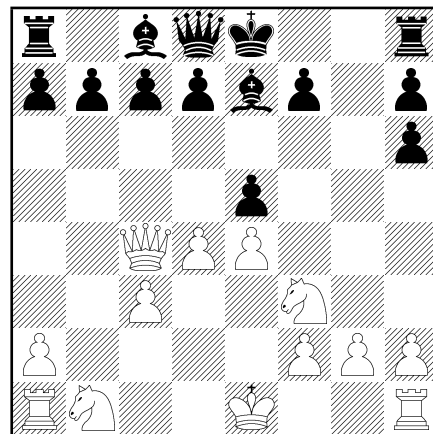
with a draw by perpetual check - Tchigorin
Evans' Gambit with 5.. ♗e7

5. ... , ♗e7



6. d4

[6. ♖b3 ♗h6 7. d4 ♗a5 8. ♖b5 ♗×c4 9. ♗×h6 g×h6 10. ♖×c4

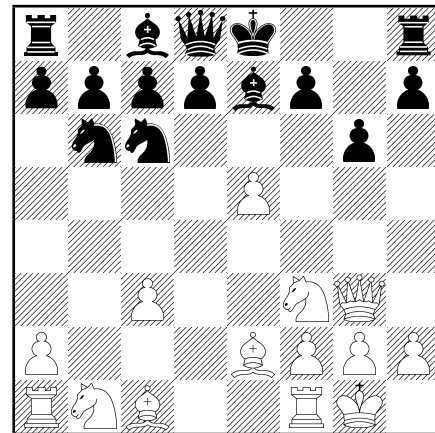
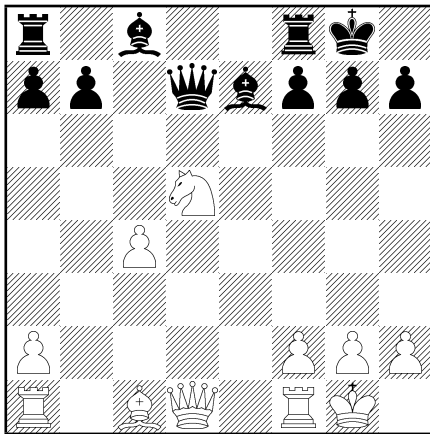


unclear: Harding-Hodgson corr. 1975]

6. ... , ♗a5 7. ♗×e5 ♗×c4 8. ♗×c4 d5 9. e×d5 ♖×d5 10. ♗e3 ♖d7 11. O-O ♗f6 12. c4 O-O

[12. ... , b5 = Nunn]

13. ♗c3 c6 14. d5 c×d5 15. ♗c×d5 ♗×d5 16. ♗×d5



+ = Nunn-Larsen 1980

White has a small edge.

The most famous recent example of this line is of course:

The Black king never escapes the centre

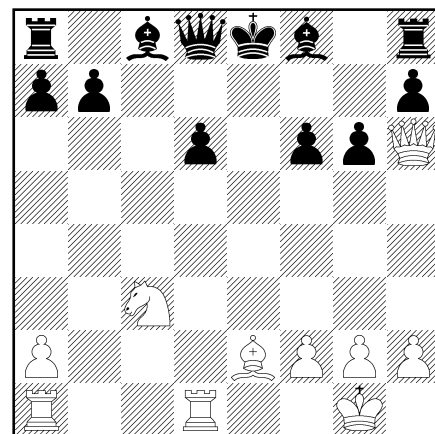
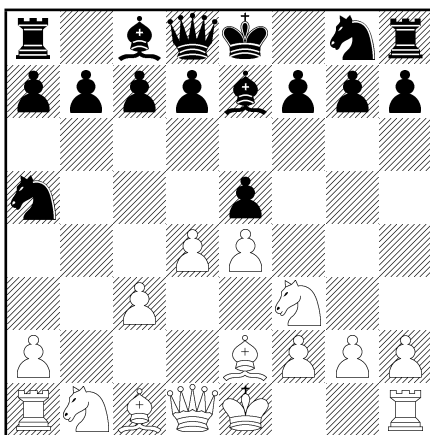
13. c4 d6 14. ♖d1 ♘d7 15. ♕h6 ♘c×e5 16. ♘×e5 ♘×e5 17. ♘c3

Develop before attacking with a move like Bg7

17. ..., f6 18. c5 ♘f7 19. c×d6 c×d6 20. ♖e3 ♘×h6 21. ♖×h6 ♕f8

6.2.3 Kasparov, Gary-Anand, Viswanathan, Riga 1993

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕c4 ♕c5 4. b4 ♕×b4 5. c3 ♕e7 6. d4 ♘a5 7. ♕e2



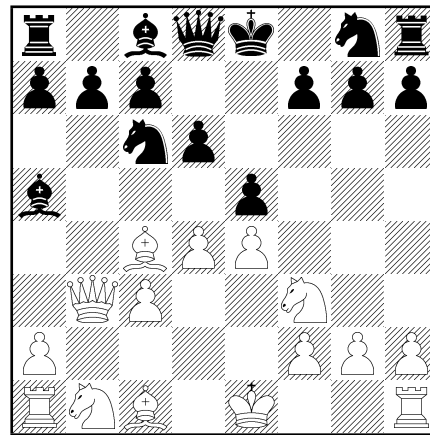
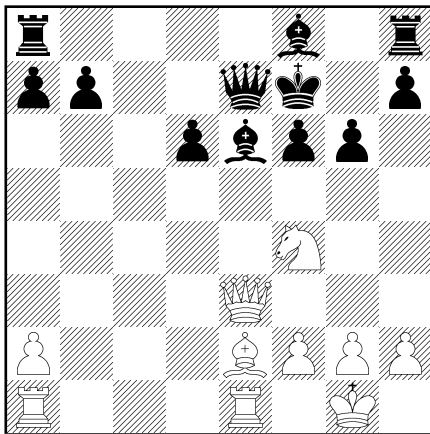
A new move

7. ..., e×d4 8. ♖×d4 ♘f6 9. e5 ♘c6 10. ♖h4 ♘d5 11. ♖g3 g6 12. O-O ♘b6

White's lead on development could hardly be greater

22. ♖e3+ ♕f7 23.

Nd5 Be6 24. ♘f4 ♖e7 25. ♖e1 1-0



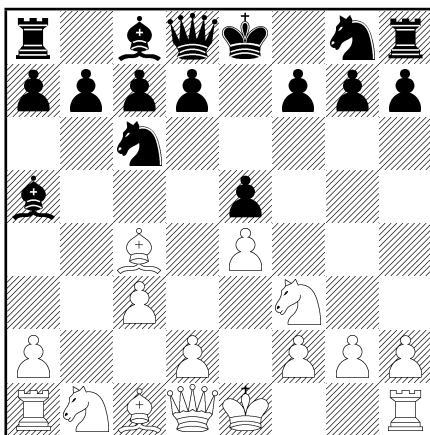
[25. ... , ♖d7 26. ♙b5 ♗×b5 27. ♗×e6+ ♔g7
28. ♘d5 ♗b2 29. ♜ab1]

[25. ... , ♜e8 26. ♘×e6 ♗×e6 27. ♗×e6+
♜×e6 28. ♙c4]

[25. ... , ♙h6 26. ♙c4]

An amazing destruction of the then world No.3 and his PCA championship challenger.

Evans' Gambit with 5. ... , ♙a5



This is the best line.

6. d4 d6

Lasker's Defence, which led to some disillusionment with the Gambit.

7. ♗b3

Black has three tries here, but only the last is trustworthy:

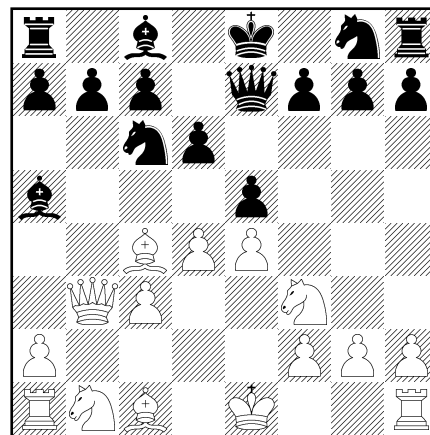
A. 7. ... , ♗e7

B. 7. ... , ♘×d4

C. 7. ... , ♗d7

Lasker's Defence with 7. ... , ♗e7

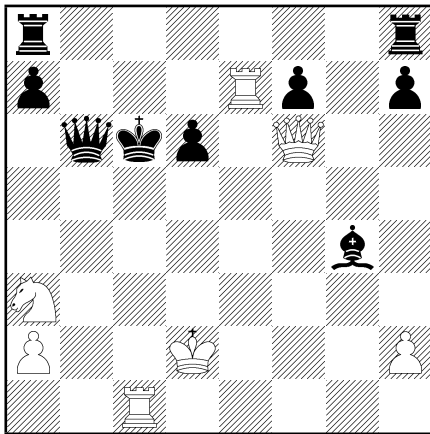
7. ... , ♗e7



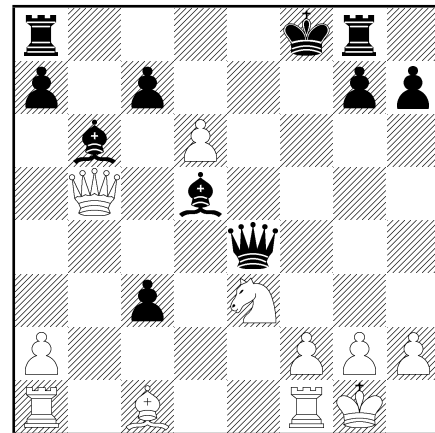
The trouble with this move is that the Nc6 has no good retreat, and must advance. This leads to trouble. The game might go:

8. d5 ♘d4 9. ♘×d4 e×d4 10. ♗a4+ ♔d8
11. ♗×a5 ♗×e4+ 12. ♔d2 ♗×g2 13. ♜e1
♘f6 14. ♙d3 ♗×f2+ 15. ♜e2 ♗g1

16. ♘a3 ♙g4 17. ♙b2 d×c3+ 18. ♙×c3 ♗b6
19. ♙×f6+ g×f6 20. ♗c3 ♔d7 21. ♙b5+
c6 22. d×c6+ b×c6 23. ♙×c6+ ♔d8 24.
♗×f6+ ♔c7 25. ♜e7+ ♔×c6 26. ♜c1+



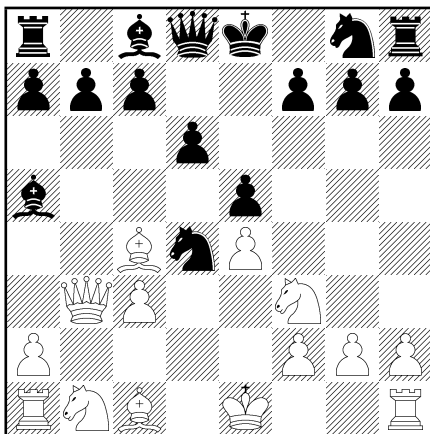
15. ♖×b7 ♕d5 16. ♗b5 ♕b6 17. ♘c4 ♗e4
18. ♘e3



26. ..., ♗c5 27. ♖×c5+ ♕×c5 28. ♗c3+
♘b6 29. ♗b4+ ♕c6 30. ♗b5#

Lasker's Defence with 7. ..., ♘×d4

7. ..., ♘×d4



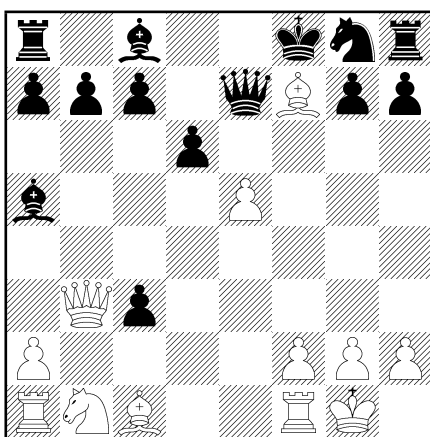
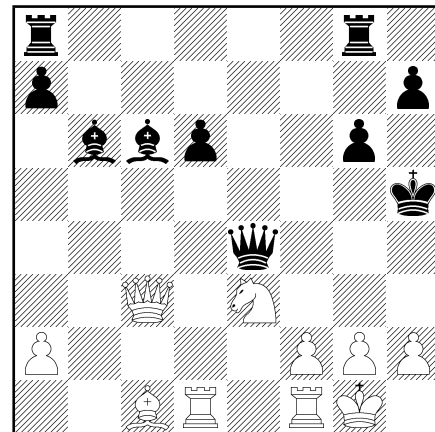
This move holds the game for White.

18. ..., ♕c6

[18. ..., ♕×e3 19. f×e3+ ♕f7 20. d×c7]

19. ♗b3 c×d6 20. ♕a3 g6 21. ♖ad1 ♕g7
22. ♗×c3+ ♘h6 23. ♕c1 ♘h5

8. ♘×d4 e×d4 9. ♕×f7+ ♕f8 10. O-O d×c3
11. e5 ♗e7



24. ♘d5

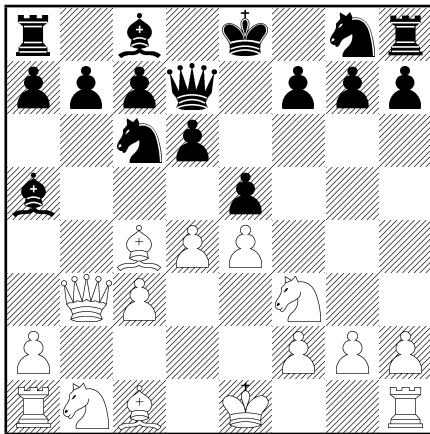
Lasker's Defence with 7. ..., ♗d7

This is the only satisfactory line.

7. ..., ♗d7

If White consolidates, Black's lost King will die.

12. ♕×g8 ♖×g8 13. e×d6 ♗e5 14. ♘a3 ♕e6 covers f7

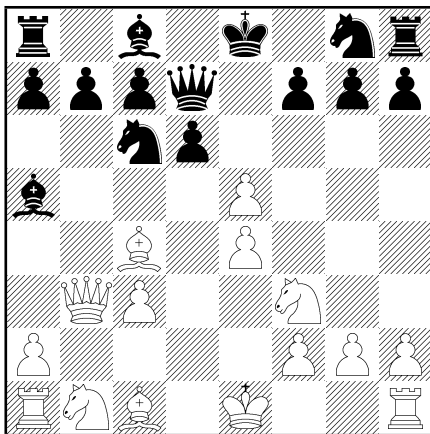
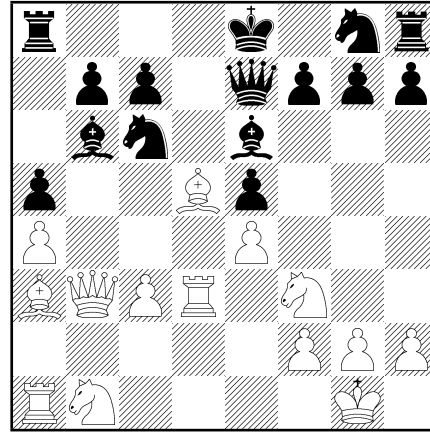


[11. ..., a5 is less safe:

12. ♖d5 ♖g4 13. ♜d3 ♖e6 14. ♖a3

Now as far as I can find out the best try for White here is:

8. d×e5!



+ Shaposhnikov-Veltmander 1958]

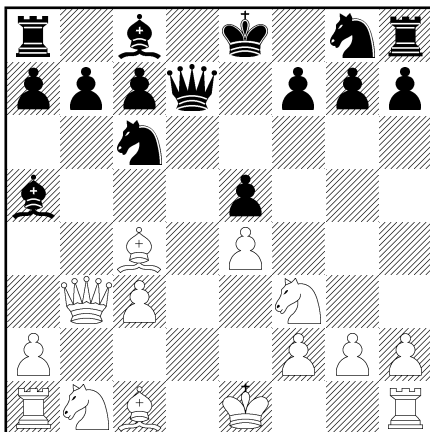
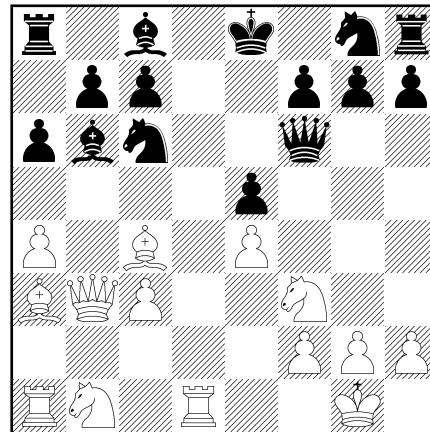
12. ♖a3 ♜f6

Now Black has:

CI: 8. ..., d×e5

CII: 8. ..., ♖b6

Variation CI: 8. ..., d×e5

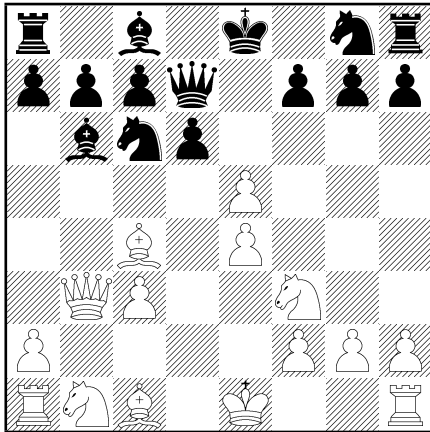


13. a5 ♖×a5 14. ♖d5 ♖b6 15. ♞bd2 ♞ge7
16. ♞c4 ♖a7 17. ♜d2 8/=

With enough compensation for the material, according to Estrin.

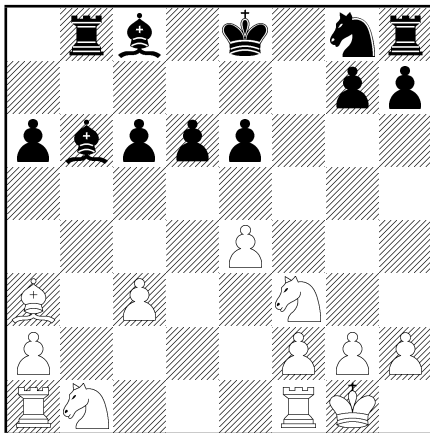
9. O-O ♖b6 10. ♜d1 ♜e7 11. a4 a6

Variation CII: 8. ..., ♖b6



This may be the best line for Black.

9. ♖b5 a6 10. ♖a4 ♕e6 11. ♖xc6+ bxc6
 12. O-O ♖b8 13. ♕xe6+ fxe6 14. exd6
 cxd6 15. ♖a3



+ =

In this endgame, White has a slight advantage, according to Estrin.

Chapter 7

Appendix 1. Why is it called “Italian”?

The play most characteristic of the late 1700s and later was dominated by the style of the Italian MODENESE SCHOOL - Italian players and writers like DEL RIO, LOLLI and PONZIANI, through whom the *Italian Game* (*Guioco Piano* and related openings) came into prominence. Fast development followed by *attack* was the name of the game, and beyond this it is difficult to see much theory at all; players were concerned with direct attack - to mate, or lose gloriously in the attempt. From this period we inherit all the older tactical variations of the *King's Gambit* and *Guioco Piano*, where sacrifices were common and their acceptance almost routine. This period should not be thought of as artless - it produced legions of fine analysts and several games of genius, and much was learned about the art of attack.

Sadly, when players learned to decline or return sacrificed material, a lot of the steam went out of these openings. e.g. an old line of the *Danish Gambit* goes **1 e4, e5; 2 d4, exd4; 3 c3, exc3; 4 Bc4, cxb2; 5 Bxb2**. If Black clings to the material White will have a good time, but MIESES showed **5. . . ., d5; 6 Bxd5, Nf6** secures open lines and probably the two Bishops. The best line for White here is probably *7 Bxf7+ Kxf7; 8 Qxd8, Bb4+ 9 Ke2, Rxd8* when Black has no extra material but can play to win the ending with the *Queen's-side majority*. Technique was replacing romance in chess.

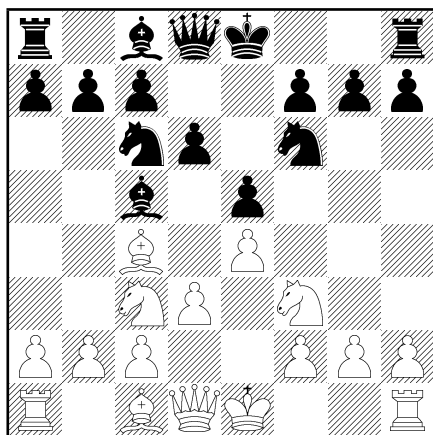
The play of the American Paul MORPHY brought some additional science to all this, not that everyone recognised it at the time. Through his games he showed that a successful attack must be based on a lead in *development*. Similarly, he showed that a player who is behind in development must not open lines to ‘free their position’, since these lines will provide avenues along which the better-developed side will attack - instead, they should keep things closed until they have caught up a bit. Morphy's

play was the Italian game perfected, and I have used many of his games in this booklet.

Chapter 8

Appendix 2. Oh, if you must... some ideas for playing the Giuoco Pianissimo

If you must play the **Giuoco Pianissimo**, here are some quick hot tips for this line.



Don't be in a hurry to castle: your opponent may play ...Bg4 (or Bg5) and pin your knight against the Queen. If you have castled you probably won't be able to play h3 (or ...h6) without dangerously weakening your king. Steinitz discovered that the sacrificial idea 6. O-O, Bg4; 7. h3, h5! 8. h×g4, h×g4 was playable for Black in many positions (see below) because of the attack on the King down the open h-file: once the Queen gets to h5 White is finished. Even playing 1. e4, e5; 2. Nf3, Nc6; 3. Bc4, Bc5; 4. Nc3, Nc6; 5. d3, d6; 6. h3 is not advisable as Black may play the standard sacrifice ...Bxh3 at some point, or lever open your king's side with ...g7-g5-g4.

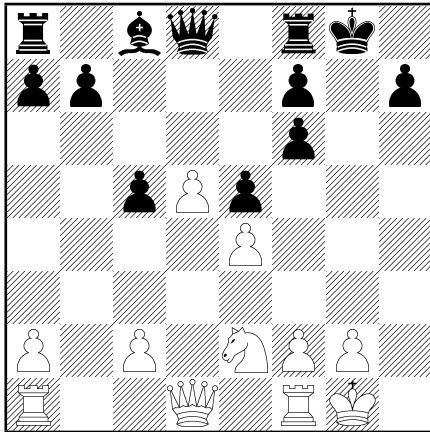
The key question in this line is: *how are you going to develop your queen's bishop?* White on move six can go 6. Bg5 hoping for 6. ... B×e3; 7. f×e3 when there is a juicy half-open f-file to attack along. Black is better off calmly retreating with 6. ... Bb6 or even leaving the Bishop at c5.

The analysts gradually agreed that 6. Bg5, the **Canal Variation**, is the best move. One line of this goes 6. ... h6; (this is OK for Black before castling) when the main line goes 7. B×f6, Qxf6; 8. Nd5, Qd8. White has given up the Bishop pair to achieve a bit of initiative. [There is a hairy line with 6. Bg5, h6; 7. B×f6, Qxf6; 8. Nd5, Qg6!? 9. N×c7+ which is supposed to be poor for Black if White plays 9. Bg1 instead, but White has to prove it!] Other ways to play for Black are to hit the other bishop with 6. ... Na5 (as in the final game) or to play himself 6. ... Be6.

in the Canal Variation: to *emphasise the pin on the Nf6*, if you're allowed, with moves like Nd5, and otherwise threaten to give Black doubled, and therefore weak, f-pawns. I played a miniature with this theme at the British Universities' Congress some years ago:

8.0.4 Regis (Exeter) - Orpwood (Salford), 1987.

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. d3 Bb4 5. Nge2 O-O 6. O-O d6 7. Bg5 Na5 8. B×f6! g×f6 9. Nd5 Bc5 10. b4 N×c4 11. d×c4 c6 12. b×c5 c×d5 13. c×d5 d×c5
DIAGRAM



14. ♖g3 ♗h8 15. ♕h5 ♕d7? 16. ♕h6 ♕d6
17. ♗h5 ♖g8 18. ♗×f6 ♖g7 19. ♕×g7+
1-0

(Ne8+ will leave White a rook ahead)

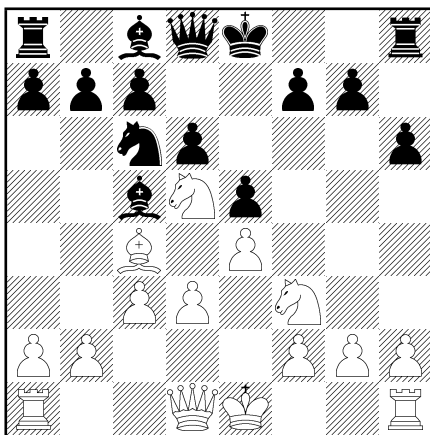
again in the Canal Variation: move the Nc3 to e.g. d5 and *play for c3 and d4* with a central space advantage. The knight on c3 can relocate to e3...

try to open up the f-file with f4: this will require you to play Be3 to stop a check from the Bc5 and to move the other Knight e.g. Nh4. From h4 the Knight can threaten to go to f5 when Black may be reluctant to remove it by ...g6 which will create weaknesses. A Queen's Knight that has travelled from c3-d5-e3 also puts pressure on this square, and if Black does play g6 then Ne3-g4 hits all the soft spots.

And here are some traps:

8.0.5 A trap in the Giuoco Pianissimo

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♗c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. d3 d6 5.
♗c3 ♗f6 6. ♖g5 h6 7. ♖×f6 ♕×f6 8. ♗d5
♕d8 9. c3



9. ..., ♖e6 ?

[better is 9. ..., ♗e7]

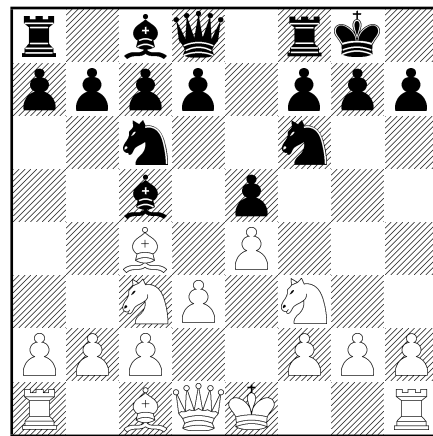
10. d4 +/- 10. ..., e×d4 11. c×d4 ♖b4+ 12.
♗×b4 ♖×c4 13. ♗×c6 b×c6 14. ♕c2

8.0.6 Another trap in the Giuoco Pianissimo

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♗c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. d3 ♗f6
5. ♗c3 O-O?!

too early

[better is 5. ..., d6]



6. ♖g5 h6 7. ♖h4 ♖b4 8. O-O ♖×c3 9.
b×c3 g5

Normally you cannot afford to do this in front of your castled King.

10. ♗×g5 h×g5 11. ♖×g5 ♗g7 12. f4+-
with a strong attack

8.0.7 One more trap in the Giuoco Pianissimo

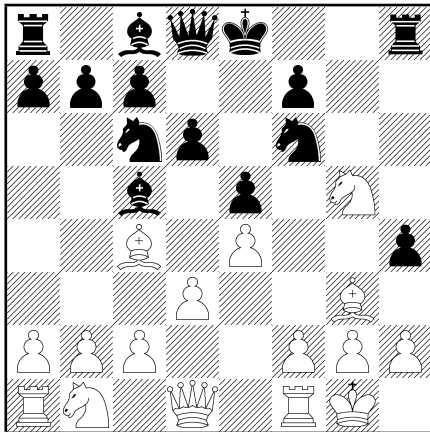
1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♗c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4. O-O?!

[better is 4. c3]

4. ..., ♗f6 5. d3 d6 6. ♖g5?

[better is 6. ♖e3]

6. ..., h6 7. ♖h4 g5 8. ♖g3 h5! 9. ♗×g5 h4



10. ♖×f7 h×g3 11. ♗×d8 ♕g4 12. ♖d2 ♗d4
13. ♗c3 ♗f3+ 14. g×f3 ♕×f3 and wins 0-1

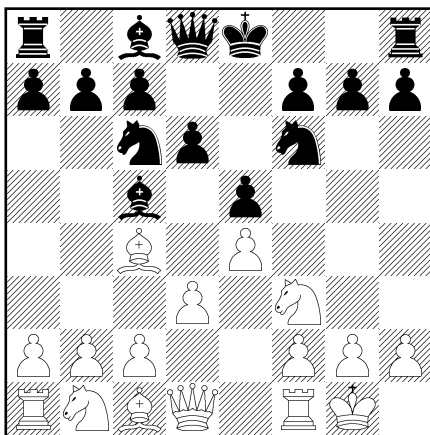
Even armed with all these ideas it's really not that good a line to play. I include one last game which is intended to put you off it for life!

8.0.8 Example Game in the Giuoco Pianissimo: Chambers-Vorhees (Dayton, Ohio) 1972

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♗c6 3. ♕c4 ♕c5 4. d3 d6 5. O-O

Too early: invites ...Bg4.

5. ..., ♗f6



This is a prime example of how not to play for this position for White.

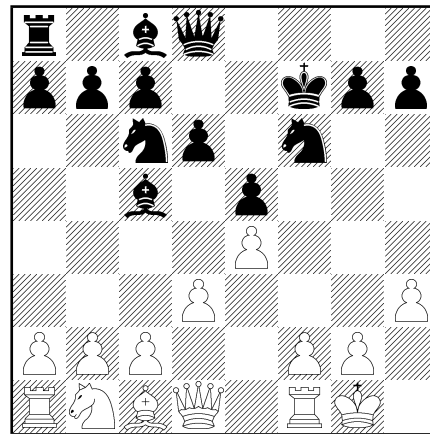
6. ♗g5

Premature.

6. ..., O-O 7. ♕×f7+ ♖×f7 8. ♗×f7 ♗×f7

White has snatched what he can.

9. h3

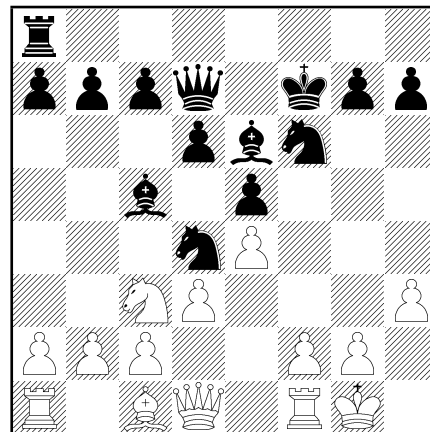


Well, this does stop ...Bg4, but invites a worse fate.

9. ..., ♕e6 10. ♗c3 ♖d7 11. ♖f3

Not good enough, I'm afraid.

11. ..., ♗d4 12. ♖d1



12. ..., ♕×h3 13. g×h3 ♖×h3 14. ♕e3 ♗f3+ 0-1

[Back to Chess Coaching Page](#)

This document (italian.html) was last modified on by Dr. Dave