

The Closed Queen's-Pawn Openings at Junior Level

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Chapter 1

For starters

Most people suggest that beginning chessplayers should play 1. e2–e4 and aim for an open, attacking style of game.

Some players may like to try 1. d2–d4.

I wrote this piece after I watched 3 out of 4 boards at a match open with 1. d2–d4, and in my opinion, played it poorly.

Why might you want to play 1. d2–d4?

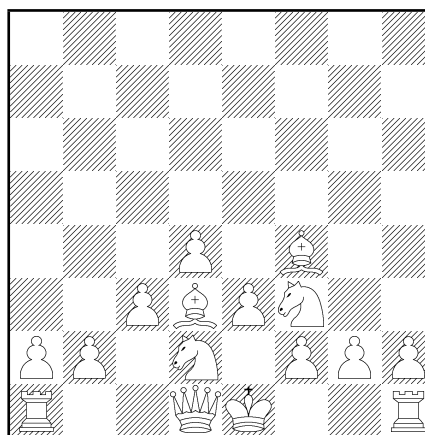
- because you are curious
- because it seems safer and more solid than 1. e2–e4
- because people won't expect it
- because I told you not to...

Let's look at it more seriously then, and see what we think.

1.1 How many people play 1. d2–d4 (stodgily)

After 1. d2–d4, how should you place your pieces? One system of development that looks quite reasonable starts with the Bishops: your Queen's Bishop can go to f4, then you play e2–e3, and develop the King's Bishop. So:

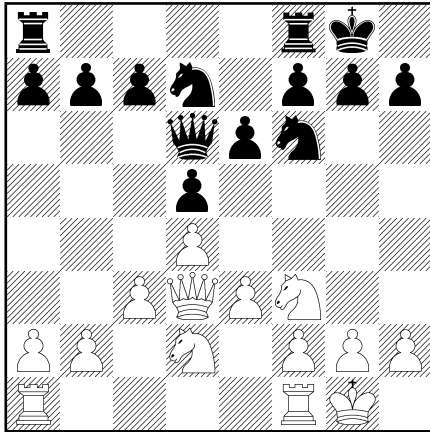
d2–d4, ♖g1–f3, ♗c1–f4, e2–e3, ♗f1–d3, O–O, ♖b1–d2



This is called the London System. It's a perfectly solid system, which masters can pay for a win. But I have a feeling that this is not a great way for juniors to play. Most of them I think would find this rather too slow and dull, everything gets bogged down, and often neither side can come up with any ideas of how to win and would have to rely on their opponent overlooking something to win. If you are much better than a beginner, and you like this style of playing, then you can have a go for either side, but my advice is: stick to

1. e2–e4!

How should you play the London system as White or Black? Black often develops their Bishops on f5 and d6. Because White is going to take a few moves to achieve Bf1–d3, Black may play ...Bc8–f5 first, and the light-squared Bishops come off. Also, Black will often challenge the Bc1–f4 with ...Bf8–d6, and the dark-squared Bishops also come off. We then have a slow game with Knights and Queens.



The first thing to do if you get into this sort of position (whether you are White or Black) is to

open up a file for your Rooks

. As Black, you may not be able to achieve ...e 7-e5 very quickly, but it is likely that you can play ...c 7-c5. So one good rule for playing Black in these openings is for you to play ...c 7-c5 at some point. This means that your Queen's Knight should not be placed straightaway at c6 in front of the c-Pawn, but instead go to c6 only after ...c 7-c5. Another idea is to play ...Nb 8-d7, which actually supports the ...c 7-c5 break.

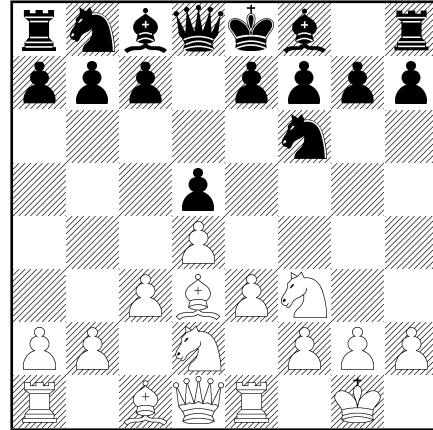
1.2 How you should play 1. d2-d4 (open)

The reason that games with 1. d2-d4 are called "closed" is because the positions are often slow with few open lines. After 1. e2-e4 e7-e5, all the major openings set out to achieve the advance d2-d4 for White. We can play it straight away (2. d2-d4, the Centre Game) or after 2. Nf3 Nf3 Nb8-c6 3. d2-d4 (the Scotch Game). Perhaps the best way is to prepare the advance with c2-c3 as in the Giuoco Piano (1. e2-e4 e7-e5 2. Nf3 Nf3 Nb8-c6 3. f1-c4 c8-c5 4. c2-c3 Ng8-f6 5. d2-d4 or Ruy Lopez 1. e2-e4 e7-e5 2. Nf3 Nf3 Nb8-c6 3. f1-b5 a7-a6 4. b5-a4 Ng8-f6 5. O-O f8-e7 6. f1-e1 b7-b5 7. a4-b3 O-O 8. c2-c3 d7-d6 9. h2-h3 Nb8-d7 10. d2-d4 White could also play d 2-d4 on moves 5 or 9).

But after 1. d2-d4 it's not obvious how to achieve e2-e4. Obviously White can just play 2.c2-c4, which is the famous Queen's Gambit. But there is another system, named after the Belgian master Colle, which specifically aims at e2-e4 and also leads to a nice open game. If juniors do want to play 1.d2-d4 I always tell them about this system.

The idea is: 1. d2-d4 2. Nf3 3. e2-e3!

This does block in the Bc1 but doesn't mean to leave it that way. Continue: 4. f1-d3 5. Nb1-d2 6. O-O 7. f1-e1 (of course, Black usually moves too!)



8. e2-e4!

Now White has good development and will get open lines for the pieces. Like this:

Colle - Buerger [D05] Hastings - (0.158), 1928
 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 e6 4.f3 d3 5.e7 6.Nbd2
 O-O 7.O-O Nbd7 7.e4 dxe4 8.Nxe4 Nxe4
 9.fxe4 Nf6 10.f3 c5 11.dxc5 fxc5 12.g5
 fxe7 13.Ne2 Nc7 14.Nad1 Nd8 15.Ne5 d7
 16.fxh7+ Nxh7 17.fxf6 fxf6 18.Nh5+ Ng8
 19.Nxf7+ Nh7 20.Nd3 1-0

If you like the look of this, I have some notes on this system tucked away somewhere.

1.3 How you can play 1. d2-d4 (expertly)

The main Queen's-Pawn openings usually are based around playing c 2-c4 rather than e 2-e4. In the Queen's Gambit after

1.d2-d4 d 7-d5

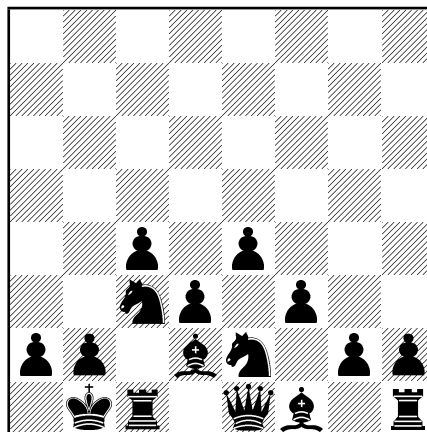
White puts pressure on the Black centre with

2.c2-c4

and later can play a Rook to the c-file, which is likely to be opened.

When you know a bit more about how to play with each piece, the Queen's Gambit is a fine opening to play, but by the time you know enough to play the Queen's Gambit well, your opponent's may start

avoiding 1. d2-d4 d7-d5 by playing one of the Indian Defences 1. d2-d4 ♖g8-f6 . Now there's an idea: you mean, I don't have to go through all this London system stuff? Right! You can play the Black side of the London system or the Colle to win if you fancy it, but you might prefer to have something a little spicier. Not an Indian Defence, but the Dutch Defence.



The Stonewall formation is aggressive but as you can tell from its name, it is also quite solid. White cannot hope to make a quick raid on Black's position, while the f5 pawn is a beach-head for your King's-side attack. Ideas for Black include:

- play ...Qe8 and ...Qh4
- play ...Kh8, ...Rg8 and ...g5
- play ...Ne4 and ...Ndf6
- re-organise your bishops with ...Be 7-d6 or ...Bd 7-e8-h4

1.4 How to avoid the Queen's Pawn game if you think your opponent plays stodgily.

The Dutch Defence is one of the oldest and most aggressive defences to the Queen's Pawn opening. It goes:

1. d2-d4 f 7-f5

Now White has several ways of continuing. If White knows a bit of theory they may know that one of the best ways to play for White is to play a set-up with:

1. d2-d4 2. c2-c4 3. ♖g1-f3 4. g2-g3 5. ♕f1-g2 6. O-O

After this Black has three systems:

Leningrad system: 1. ..., f7-f5 2. ..., ♖g8-f6 3. ..., g7-g6 4. ..., ♕f8-g7 5. ..., O-O 6. ..., d7-d6

Classical system: 1. ..., f7-f5 2. ..., ♖g8-f6 3. ..., e7-e6 4. ..., ♕f8-e7 5. ..., O-O 6. ..., d7-d6

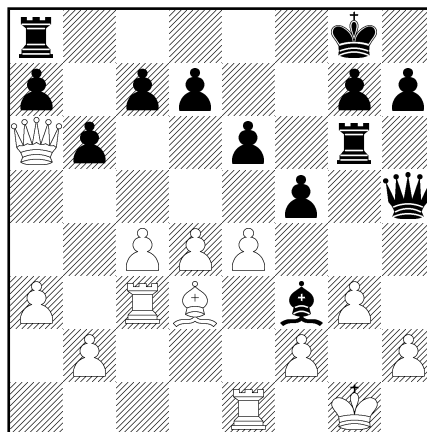
Stonewall system: 1. ..., f7-f5 2. ..., ♖g8-f6 3. ..., e7-e6 4. ..., ♕f8-e7 5. ..., O-O 6. ..., d7-d5

In each system Black gets a flexible development with chances of a King's-side attack. If you fancy this idea, I have tucked away some notes on the Stonewall system.

Of course, you can combine these ideas. Here's a couple of example games from an early Dutch fan, Mikhail Botvinnik, who later became World Champion.

Abramovic,G - Botvinnik,M [A85] Soviet Union, 1924

1.d4 f5 2.♖f3 ♗f6 3.c4 e6 4.♗c3 b6 5.♕g5 ♕e7 6.e3 ♕b7 7.♕d3 O-O 8.O-O Ne4 9.♕×e7 ♗×e7 10.♖c1 ♗a6 11.a3 ♖f6 12.♗a4 ♗×c3 13.♖×c3 ♕×f3 14.♗×a6 ♖g6 15.g3 ♗g5 16.♖e1 ♗h5 17.e4

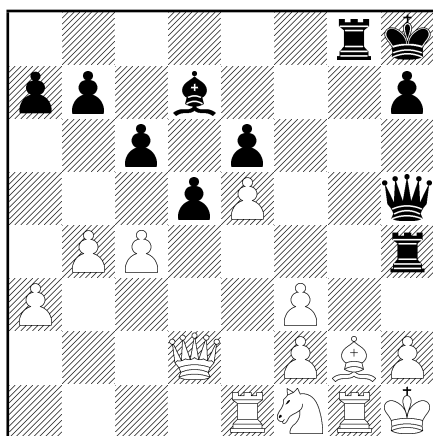


17. ..., ♖×h2+ 0-1

18. ♔×h2 ♜h6+ 19. ♔g1 ♜h1#

Steiner Herman - Botvinnik M [A95/12] Ch Europe (juniors), Groningen (Netherl, 1946

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 ♘f6 4. ♖g2 ♖b4+ 5. ♖d2 ♖e7 6. ♘c3 O-O 7. ♞c2 d5 8. ♘f3 c6 9.O-O Qe8 10. ♖f4 ♞h5 11. ♞ae1 ♘bd7 12. ♘d2 g5 13. ♖c7 ♘e8 14. ♖e5 ♘×e5 15.d×e5 f4 16.g×f4 g×f4 17. ♘f3 ♘h8 18. ♔h1 ♘g7 19. ♞c1 ♖d7 20.a3 ♞f7 21.b4 ♞g8 22. ♞g1 ♘f5 23. ♘d1 ♞fg7 24. ♞×f4 ♞g4 25. ♞d2 ♘h4 26. ♘e3 ♘×f3 27.e×f3 ♞h4 28. ♘f1 ♖g5 0-1



Bg 5-f4xh2 is on its way.

If White hasn't met the Dutch defence before, it's likely they will just play their usual old moves: the London system, the classical system or a Gambit.

The London system

d2-d4, ♘g1-f3, ♖c1-f4

is just asking for Black to play ...d7-d6 and ...e7-e5, with a good game.

If White plays a classical Queen's Pawn game with

d2-d4 c2-c4 ♘g1-f3 ♘b1-c3 ♖c1-g5 e2-e3 ♖f1-d3

Black can get a good game with normal Dutch moves: 1.d4 f5 2.c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. ♖g5 ♖e7 5.e3 O-O 6. ♖d3 b6 7. ♘ge2 ♖b7 8.O-O ♘h5 9. ♖×e7 ♞×e7 10. ♘g3 ♘×g3 11.h×g3 d6 12.f4 ♘c6=

(0-1,54)

Harrwitz,D - Morphy,P (5) Paris match, 1858

1.d4 e6 2. ♘f3 f5 3.c4 ♘f6 4. ♖g5 ♖e7 5. ♘c3 O-O 6.e3 b6 7. ♖d3 ♖b7 8.O-O Qe8 9. ♞e2 ♘e4 10. ♖×e7 ♘×c3 11.b×c3 ♞×e7 12.a4 ♖×f3 13. ♞×f3 ♘c6 14. ♞fb1 ♞ae8 =+

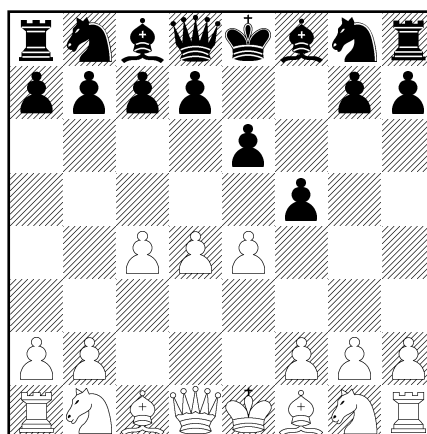
(1-0,52)

Capablanca,Jose - Tartakower,Savielly [A40] New York (06), 1924. White went on to win this famous ending, but according to Robert Bellin, sometime British Champion and longtime Dutch defender, Black has the advantage because of his better Pawn structure.

If you are interested in these lines, or the various gambits...

e.g.

Karayannis-Bellin 1993: 1. d4 e6 2. c4 f5 3. e4

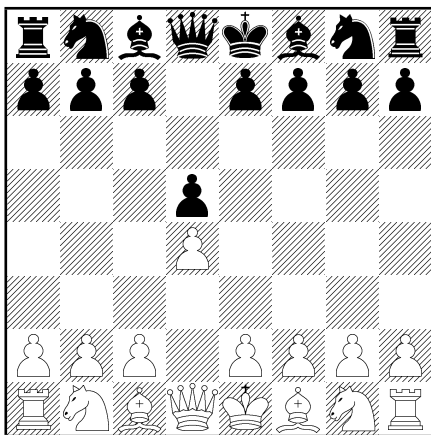


....then I have some notes on the ways

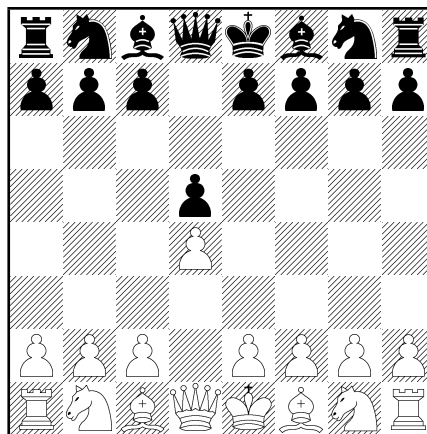
White can avoid the Dutch main lines

Chapter 2

The theory of playing against 1.d2-d4



After 1.e2-e4 e7-e5, White cannot be prevented from playing d2-d4, which White can do straight-away (in the Scotch Game) or after c2-c3 (Giucco Piano and Ruy Lopez).



2.1 Systems with c2-c4

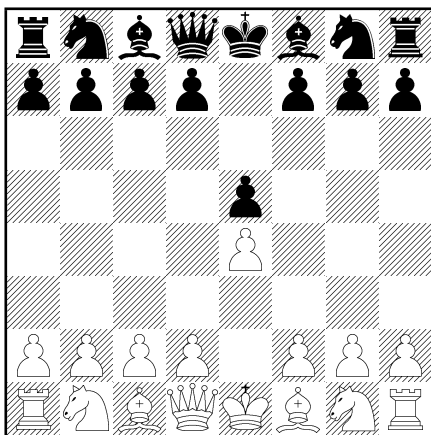
Just as in the 1.e2-e4 openings, it is possible for White to play mainly with pieces in the opening, hoping to save time by not moving any more Pawns. But just as in the 1.e2-e4 openings like Old Stodge, it is hard to stop Black getting easy equality without hitting at the Black centre with Pawns, giving them something to worry about.

But in the 1.d2-d4 d7-d5 openings, it looks like e2-e4 and c2-c4 just lose a Pawn. So juniors and even adult club players often like to play it slow and safe and simple, just getting their pieces out, keeping the centre closed and hoping to arrange a King's-side attack.

White hopes that because the centre is likely to remain closed, Black will find it hard to disturb the White build-up. Black must either swap off the attacking pieces, and/or upset the White centre.

White can always play e2-e4 as a gambit (The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit). Also, the c4 point is easy to guard with the Bc1, and so White can play 2.c2-c4, the Queen's Gambit , believing that Black will find it hard to get away with snatching the c-Pawn. We will look at all of these systems for White, with and without c2-c4.

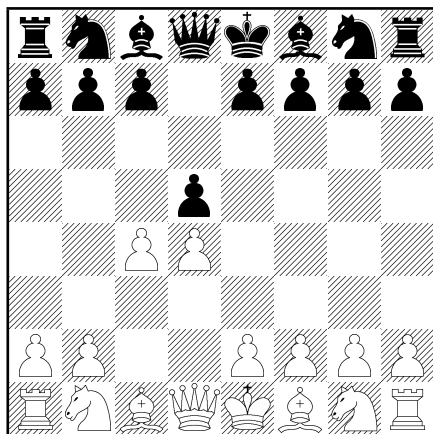
All of these openings are dangerous if you don't know what your opponent is trying to do. But only the Queen's Gambit is really strong enough



for Grandmasters.

2.1.1 The Queen's Gambit

1. d4 d5 2. c4



The idea behind the opening

I keep saying that it is difficult to put real pressure on your opponent's game without using a Pawn to hit at your opponent's central Pawns. In the Queen's Gambit, White does this straight away.

In gambit openings, White hopes that Black will waste time taking and trying to hold on to the Pawn. In the Queen's Gambit, this is a better idea than usual, since Black cannot hold on to the Pawn at all!

2. ... dxc4 3. e3 b5 4. a4 c6 5. axc5 cxc5 6. ♖f3! +-

Black can try other moves to hang on to the Pawn, but they are all more trouble than the Pawn is worth! So, Black should not try to hang on to the Pawn, but aim to hit back in the centre:

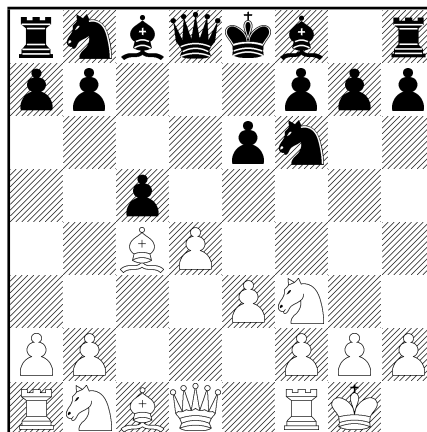
3. e3 e5!

or

3.e3 c5!

Now, White need not scramble to get back the Pawn but should try to hold on in the centre. A common sequence is:

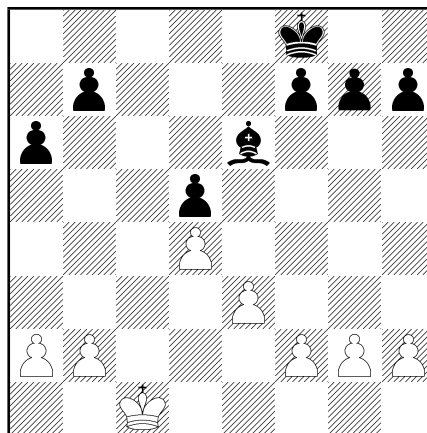
3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. e3 c5 5. ♙xc4 e6 6. O-O



How to play against this opening

If you fancy the "accept then hit back" approach, then this Queen's Gambit Accepted line is easy to learn:

- You should exchange on d4 to give White an isolated d-Pawn.
- You should play ...♞bd7-b6-d5 to stop the d-Pawn advancing.
- You should put pressure on the d-Pawn, to tie White's pieces down to defence.
- You should aim for exchanging pieces, especially the light-squared Bishop, leaving White in a poor endgame, like this one

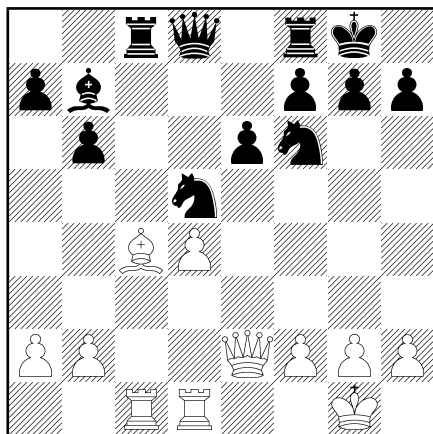


With colours reversed, this is the classic 'bad Bishop' endgame with an isolated Queen's-Pawn, from a famous Flohr-Capablanca game. Black just managed to hold on, but had a struggle! White can try little tricks on either side of the board, or try to slide the King in on the unprotected dark squares, but Black can only sit and suffer. So, playing Black against the Queen's Gambit, this is what you can hope to get to.

Example game

Salwe,G - Rubinstein,A [D26] Lodz, 1907

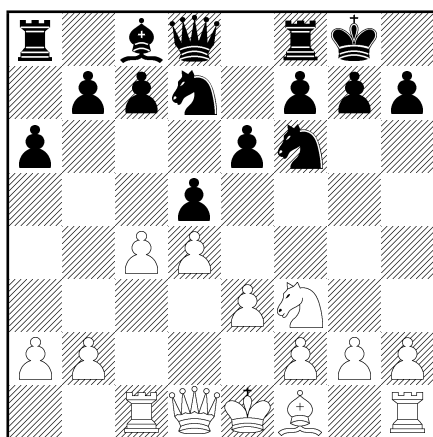
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d×c4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.e3 c5
6.♗×c4 ♘c6 7.O-O c×d4 8.e×d4 ♗e7 9.♗f4 O-O
10.♖d2 b6 11.♚fd1 ♘b4 12.♗e2 ♗b7 13.♘e5
♘bd5 14.♗g3 ♚c8 15.♚ac1...



Now Rubinstein changed the Pawn structure with 15. ..., ♘×c3, and went on to win with pressure against the c- and d-Pawns and using the Bishop on the long diagonal.

2.1.2 Swiss Defence

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. ♗g5 ♗e7 5. e3
O-O 6. ♘f3 ♘bd7 7. ♚c1 a6



The idea behind the opening

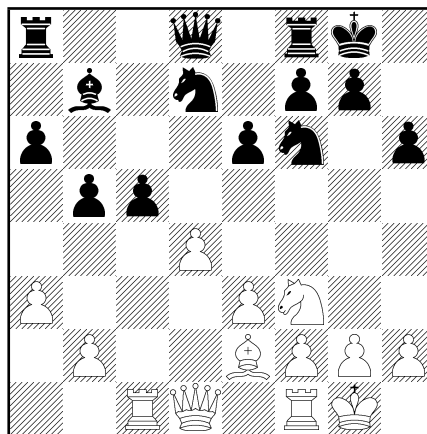
The Swiss Defence is a way of declining the Queen's Gambit. Black develops quietly to start with, but is just ready to uncoil. If White plays the automatic

8. ♗d3,

Black hits back with

8. ..., d×c4! 9. ♗×c4 b5! 10. ♗d3 c5!

In another famous Capablanca game, Black (Alekhine) had an easy time after reaching this position:



I won't give the whole game because it is rather long.

How to play this opening

White may see this Queen's-side counter-punch coming. There are two tries for White:

8. c×d5

(The Carlsbad variation - see below) or:

8. c5

After 8. c5 Black should stop the c-Pawn

8. ..., c6

then hit back:

9.b4

9. ..., a5! 10.a3 a×b4 11.a×b4 b6 12.♗d3 b×c5
13.b×c5 e5 14.♘×e5

(14.d×e5 ♘e8=;

14. ♗×f6 ♗×f6 15.d×e5 ♘×e5 16.♘×e5 ♗×e5
17.♗×h7+ ♗×h7 18.♖h5+ ♗g8 19.♖×e5 ♗a6!
with compensation)

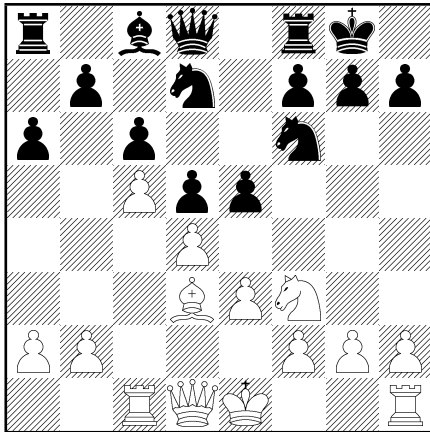
14. ..., ♘×e5 15.d×e5 ♘d7 16.♗×e7 ♖×e7
17.♖c2 ♖h4 18.O-O ♘xe5 19.♗e2 ♗a6 20.♗×a6
♚×a6 21.♚a1 ♖c4= 9. ♗d3:

see example game

Example game

Blodstein,B - Ziatdinov,R (2455) [D63] UZB-ch (9), 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.♘f3 O-O
6.e3 ♘bd7 7.♚c1 a6 8.c5 c6 9.♗d3 e5!



10. ♖xe5

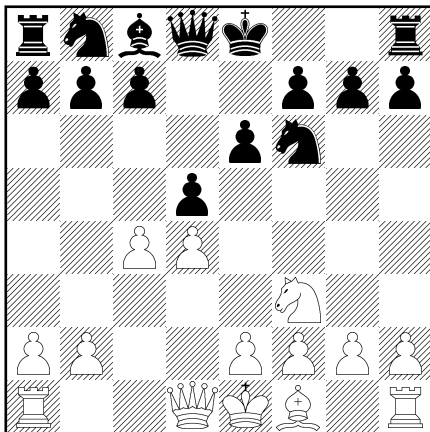
[10. dxc5 ♗e8 11. ♖f4;

10. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 11. dxc5 ♖e7!]

10. ..., ♗xe5 11. dxc5 ♗d7 12. ♖f4 ♖xc5 13. h4 ♗e8 14. ♖b1 ♖f8 15. ♗c2 g6 16. h5 ♗xe5 17. hxc6 hxc6 18. ♗d1 ♖g7 19. ♗f1 ♗f6 20. ♗e2 ♖f5 21. ♗g3 ♖xb1 22. ♗xb1 ♗ad8 23. ♗d4 ♗c4 0-1

2.1.3 QGD with 5.Bf4

QGD with 5. ♖f4 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♗f6 4. ♗f3 ♖e7 5. ♖f4.



The idea behind the opening

This is a proper Grandmaster opening and so you will not be able to bash out moves without thinking and expect to get an equal game (as if you ever can!)

How to play against this opening

The usual ideas of developing sensibly then hitting back in the centre are the right recipe here.

4. ♗f3 ♖e7 5. ♖f4 O-O 6. e3

(we've developed sensibly, so...)

6. ..., c5 7. dxc5 ♖xc5 8. ♗c2 ♗c6 9. ♗d1 ♗a5 10. a3 ♖e7 11. ♗d2 e5 12. ♖g5 d4 13. ♗b3 ♗d8 =

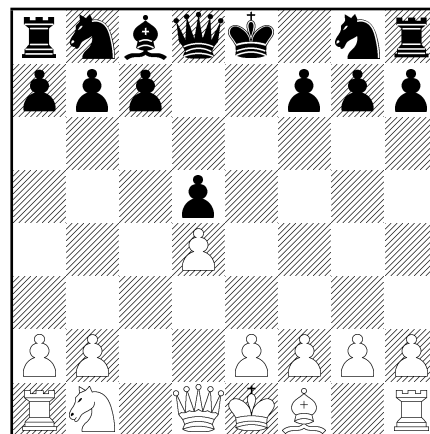
Example game

Jussupow,A (2635) - Kortschnoj,V (2630) [D37] Tilburg, 1987

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗f3 d5 4. ♗c3 ♖e7 5. ♖f4 O-O 6. e3 c5 7. dxc5 ♖xc5 8. ♗c2 ♗c6 9. ♗d1 ♗a5 10. a3 ♖e7 11. ♗d2 e5 12. ♖g5 d4 13. ♗b3 ♗d8 14. ♖e2 a5 15. ♗a4 ♗g4 16. ♖xe7 ♗xe7 17. exd4 ♗h4 18. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 19. ♗d2 exd4 20. O-O ♗ad8 21. ♗ac5 d3 22. ♗c3 ♖e2 23. ♗e1 a4 24. ♗xa4 ♗fe8 25. h3 ♗e5 26. ♗dxe2 dxe2 27. ♗c1 b5 28. ♗b6 ♗d1 29. ♗xe2 ♗f3+ 30. gxf3 ♗xe2 0-1

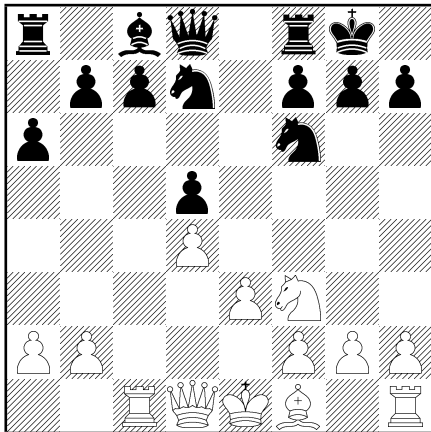
2.1.4 Exchange variation

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. cxd5



This is the classic Exchange, but there is a variation that comes out of the Swiss Defence.

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♗f6 4. ♖g5 ♖e7 5. e3 O-O 6. ♗f3 ♗bd7 7. ♗c1 a6 8. cxd5 exd5



This variation, from the Swiss Defence, is known as the Carlsbad Variation.

The idea behind the opening

White simplifies the centre, hoping to make use of slightly more active pieces and the open c-file. In the main Exchange Variation, White often plays Rab1 and pushes the b-Pawn, but in the Carlsbad Variation, this would waste time.

How to play against this opening

In the main line Exchange, Black can play a quick ...Bf5; in the Carlsbad, Black is more likely to head for a normal King's-side counterattack.

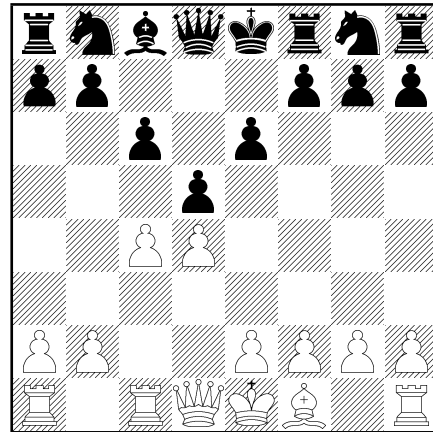
Example game

Soares - Moindrot [D65] corr ol, 1945

1.d4 e6 2.c4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e3 ♘bd7
 6.♘f3 O-O 7.♖c1 a6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♙d3 c6
 10.♗c2 ♗e8 11.O-O ♘f8 12.♘e5 ♘6d7 13.♙xe7
 ♗xe7 14.♘xd7 ♙xd7 15.♘a4 ♗g5 16.♘c5 ♙g4
 17.♘xb7 ♙f3 18.g3 ♗h5 19.♗fe1 ♗e6 20.♙f1
 ♗h6 21.h4 ♘g6 22.♗xc6 ♗f8 0-1

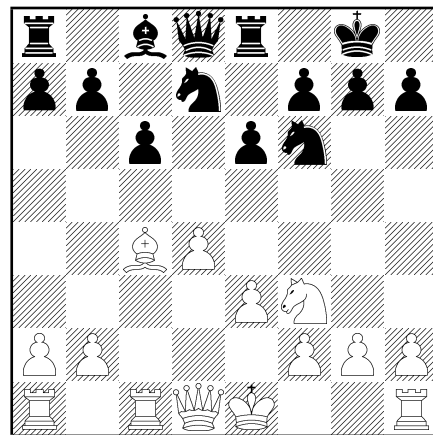
2.1.5 Semi-Slav Systems

...d5,...e6 and ...c6



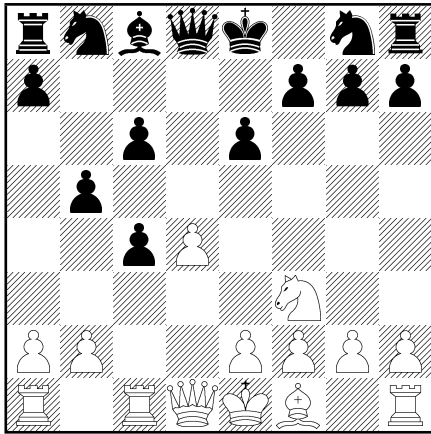
The ideas behind the opening

- First, Black sets up a little fortress in the centre, and develops at least a few pieces.
- Then, Black must release the Bc8 and open up a file for the Rooks. So Black must play either ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5, perhaps first playing ...dxc4 so that Black doesn't get left with an isolated d-Pawn

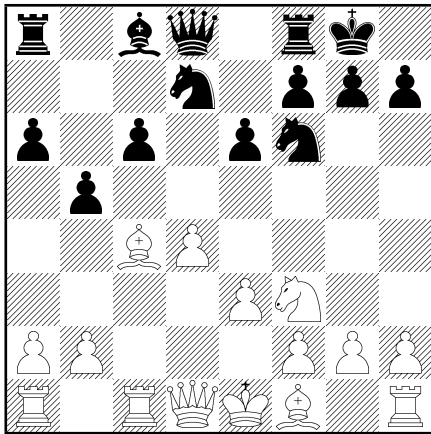


Black ready for ...e7-e5!

- Black has already played ...c6 which can support ...b5. This gives two ideas:
- Quickly play ...dxc4 and ...b7-b5, to try and hang on to the c-Pawn.
- Wait until White has moved the Bf1 somewhere, then make it waste a move or two by ...dxc4, Bcx4, ...b7-b5! Black can then play ...c7-c5 and ...♙c8-b7, giving the Bishop a nice long diagonal.



Grabbing the c-Pawn - risky!



Hitting the Bishop after ...dxc4: follow up with Bb7 and c7-c5

How to play this opening

I can't promise that players of d2-d4 will rattle out the same moves game after game like e4 ♗f3 ♗c4 d3...

There are several lines where the Semi-Slav is seen:

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 e6

or

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 c6

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.♗f3 dxc4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.e4 ♗b4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.♗f3 ♗f6 5.e3 ♗bd7 6.♗d3 ♗d6

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.♗f3 ♗f6 5.e3 ♗bd7 6.♗d3 dxc4

and if you play the Dutch:

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.e3 f5!?

[4. ♗f3 f5?! is less good because of 5. ♗f4, seizing control of e5]

Example games:

Here's a "grab the c-Pawn" game, although you can see the risks Black takes in the centre:

Collas,D (2280) - Flear,G (2495) [D31] Paris (3), 1992

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.♗f3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗b4 6.e3 b5 7.♗d2 a5 8.axb5 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 cxb5 10.b3 ♗b7 11.bxc4 b4 12.♗b2 ♗f6 13.♗d3 ♗bd7 14.♖c2 ♖c7 15.O-O O-O 16.♖fc1 ♖fc8 17.e4 e5 18.c5 exd4 19.♗xd4 ♖c6 20.♗h4 g6 21.f3 a4 22.♖d2 b3 23.e5 ♗h5 24.♗e4 ♖b5 25.e6 ♗xe4 26.exd7 ♖xd7 27.fxe4 a3 28.♖f2 ♗f4 29.♖d1 ♖g4 30.♗h1 b2 31.♖ab1 a2 32.♖xb2 axb1 ♖ 33.♖xb1 ♖xh4 34.g3 ♖d8 35.gxf4 ♖cb8 0-1

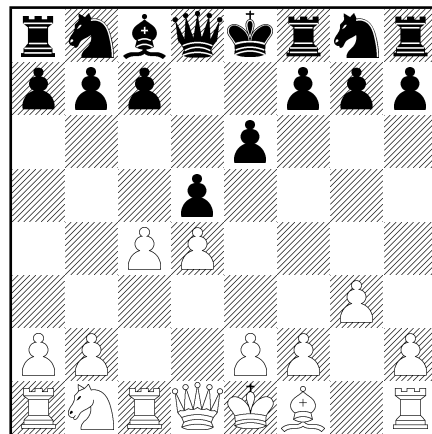
And the other ideas can be seen in this shortie:

Samisch,F - Capablanca,J [D46] Moskva (18), 1925

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.d4 e6 3.c4 d5 4.♗c3 c6 5.e3 ♗bd7 6.♗d3 a6 7.O-O dxc4 8.♗xc4 b5 9.♗d3 c5 10.♖e2 ♗b7 11.♖d1 ♖c7 12.e4 cxd4 13.♗xd4 ♗c5 14.♗b3 ♗d6 15.h3 b4 16.♗b1 ♗e5 17.♗f4 O-O 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♗1d2 ♗xb2 20.♖ab1 ♗c3 21.♗c4 a5 22.e5 ♗d7 23.♗xh7+ ♗xh7 24.♖d3+ ♗g8 25.♖xd7 ♖xc4 26.♖xb7 a4 27.♗d2 ♖xa2 28.♗f3 ♖e2 0-1

2.1.6 Catalan Opening

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3



The idea behind the opening

This is a slow, rather tricky system to play against. White hopes to keep Black under pressure and uncoil slowly.

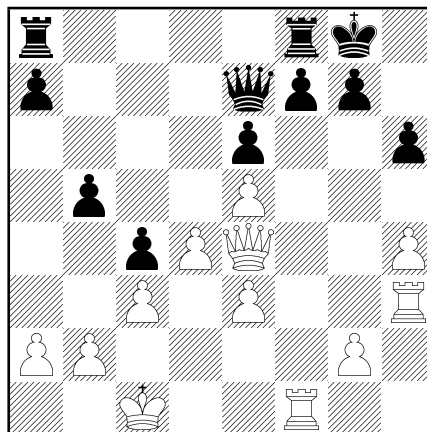
How to play against this opening

If you like the “grab the c-Pawn” strategy in the Semi-Slav, it looks even better here with White having moved the Bishop off the f1–a6 diagonal.

Example game

Gostisa,L (2410) - Burmakin,V (2530) [D31] Bled op, 1994

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗f3 d×c4 5.g3 b5 6.♕g2
 ♕b7 7.a4 a6 8.O–O ♖d7 9.e4 ♗gf6 10.♞e2 ♕e7
 11.♞d1 O–O 12.♕f4 ♜e8 13.♗e1 ♞b6 14.g4 ♗f8
 15.g5 ♗6d7 16.♞g4 ♗g6 17.♕e3 c5 18.d5 ♗de5
 19.♞g3 b4 20.a5 ♞c7 21.♗a4 e×d5 22.e×d5 ♕d6
 23.♗b6 ♗d3 24.♗×a8 ♕×a8 0-1



It’s not the f7-Pawn that is to be attacked but the King. “His fortress becomes a prison”, says Tony Dempsey.

20. ♞f6 ♖h8 21. ♞g3 b4 22. ♞f4 b×c3 23. ♞×h6+ 1-0

Point made, I hope. Normal developing moves can lead to trouble - so you need plan!

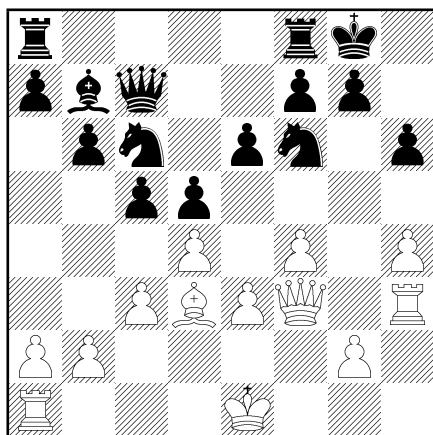
In these systems, White often develops the dark-squared Queen’s Bishop early on, but first we will look at a popular system which does just the opposite - it apparently locks in the Bishop forever!

2.2 Systems without c2-c4

These systems usually emphasise piece play rather than pressure on the centre with Pawns. White has a standard attacking plan which can walk straight through you if you aren’t careful. I’ll show you one game to worry you, then lots more to show you what to do about these systems.

Burgess Graham - Johannesson Larus (8) [A46] It, 1995

1. d4 e6 2. ♗f3 ♗f6 3. ♕g5 ♕e7 4. ♗bd2 d5 5. e3 O–O 6. ♕d3 b6 7. ♗e5 c5 8. c3 ♞c7 9. f4 ♕b7 10. ♞f3 h6 11. h4 ♗c6 12. ♞h3

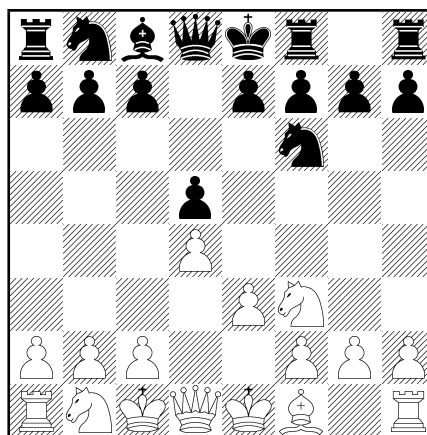


‘Normal’ moves from Black have allowed White to set up a favourable ‘Stonewall’ formation with the dark-squared Bishop outside the Pawn chain. With the centre closed, White shuffles pieces over to the King’s-side and mugs the King.

12. ..., ♗×e5 13. f×e5 ♗e4 14. ♗×e4 d×e4 15. ♕×e4 ♕×e4 16. ♞×e4 ♞d8 17. ♕×e7 ♞×e7 18. O–O–O c4 19. ♞f1 b5

2.2.1 Colle System

1. d4 d5 2. ♗f3 ♗f6 3.e3



The idea behind the opening

Now, White does know that the Bc1 must be got out, but will do so later on.

White wants to play the difficult e2–e4, so sets about it in two stages - first, developing pieces around the e4 point, with Bd3, Nbd2, and Re1 or Qe2, and only then breaking with e3–e4, hoping that the White pieces will ambush Black.

How to play against this opening

It is not hard to guess that after e2–e3 White wants to play Bd3. So

3. ... , ♕f5

is a nice awkward move, when

4. ♕d3 e6!

Is another nice awkward move (Alekhine).

The only way to be awkward back is

4. c4 e6 5. ♖b3

but Black can cope with this - White's Bishops are not well-placed to attack. Here

5. ... , ♗b6

looks OK, or keep Queens on with

5. ... , ♕c8

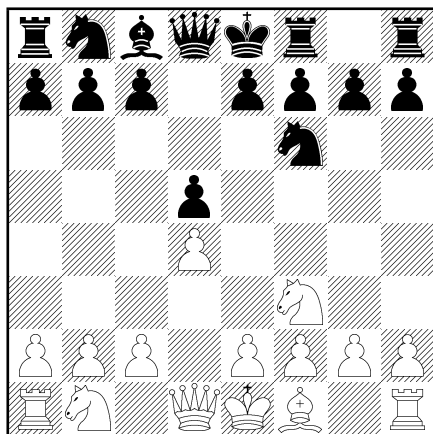
Example game

Mellen,S - Jarosz,S [D12] Lansing,MI Jan mini, 1990

1. ♘f3 d5 2. d4 ♘f6 3. e3 ♕f5 4. c4 e6 5. ♘c3 c6
6. ♗b3 ♗c8 7. ♕d2 ♘bd7 8. ♖c1 ♗b8 9. ♕e2 ♕d6
10. O-O h6 11. h3 O-O 12. cxd5 exd5 13. ♘a4 ♖e8
14. ♕b4 ♕c7 15. ♘c5 ♘xc5 16. dxc5 ♘e4 17. ♘d4
♕d7 18. ♕d3 ♗c8 19. ♗c2 ♕xh3 20. ♕xe4 ♖xe4
21. gxh3 ♗xh3 22. f3 ♖e5 23. f4 ♖xe3 24. ♖f2
♕xf4 25. ♘f5 ♖e4 26. ♕d2 ♗xf5 27. ♕xf4 ♗g4+
0-1

2.2.2 London System

1. d4 d5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. ♕f4



The idea behind the opening

White is developing smoothly and has some control over the dark squares in the centre. White can play

on either side of the board, if allowed. So this is quite a sound, flexible system, and needs some care to play against.

How to play against this opening

As I described above, Black should develop sensibly and look to open lines for Rooks.

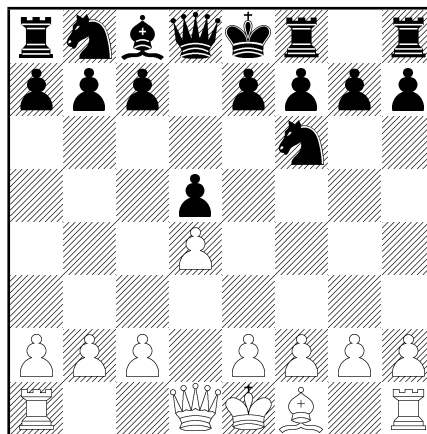
Example game

Gross,R - Hoenig,A [D02] NRW-I, 1990

1. d4 d5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. ♕f4 ♕f5 4. c3 e6 5. e3 ♕d6
6. ♕g3 O-O 7. ♕d3 ♕xd3 8. ♗xd3 c5 9. ♘bd2 ♘c6
10. O-O a5 11. a4 ♖a6 12. ♖ad1 ♕xg3 13. hxg3
cxd4 14. exd4 ♖b6 15. b3 h6 16. ♖fe1 ♗c7 17. ♖c1
♖c8 18. ♖c2 ♘b4 19. cxb4 ♗xc2 20. ♗xc2 ♖xc2
21. bxa5 ♖b4 22. ♘f1 ♘d7 23. ♘e2 ♖xb3 0-1

2.2.3 Veresov System

1. d4 d5 2. ♘c3 ♘f6 3. ♕g5



The idea behind the opening

White has a number of new ideas in this line: perhaps White can mess up Black's Pawns with Bxf6, or use the pressure against the Knight to play f3 and e4.

How to play against this opening

If you don't want White to mess up your Pawns, then you must play

3. ... , ♘bd7!

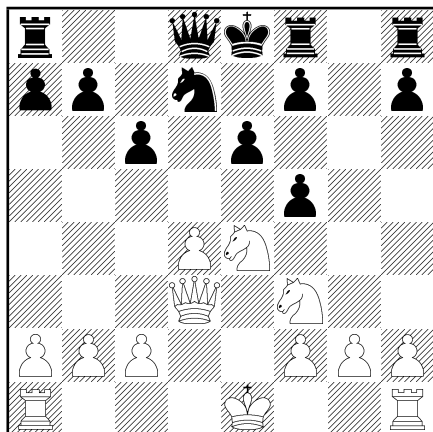
which may be the best move. But I think Bxf6 is not much to worry about, and that you should get your Bc8 out if you can:

3. ... , ♕f5!

4. ♕xf6 gxf6

recapture towards the centre if you can

5.e3 c6 6.♔d3 ♔×d3 7.♖×d3 e6 8.e4 ♘d7 9.♞f3 d×e4 10.♞×e4 f5 =



With Pawns on White squares and a Bishop on dark squares, Black is ready to uncoil.

BCO2 also gives:

4. f3 ♘bd7 5. ♘×d5 ♘×d5 6. e4 h6 7. ♔h4 N7b6 8. e×f5 ♘e3! 9. ♖d2 ♘×f1 10. ♕×f1=/+

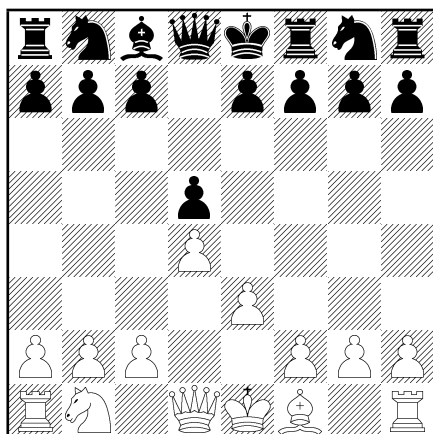
Example game

Link,U - Birke,M [D01] Wuert-chT, 1994

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♔g5 ♔f5 4.♔×f6 g×f6 5.e3 e6 6.♔d3 ♔×d3 7.♖×d3 c6 8.♞ge2 ♘d7 9.e4 d×e4 10.♖×e4 f5 11.♖f3 ♘f6 12.O-O ♖c7 13.h3 h5 14.♕b1 O-O 15.g4 h×g4 16.h×g4 ♖×h1 17.♖×h1 ♘×g4 18.♘e4 ♔g7 19.♖h7 ♔×d4 20.♘g5 ♔f6 21.♘×f7 ♖d7 22.♘f4 ♖×f7 23.♘×e6 ♖e5 0-1

2.2.4 Stonewall Attack

1. d4 d5 2. e3 with f2-f4



The idea behind the opening

White hopes to strangle the centre with f4 then kick in the King's-side with ♔f1-d3xh7+. It can work - if Black assumes there is no danger! It's also not a bad idea for Black, because White is usually less defensive.

How to play against this opening

If you think about it, White is trying to attack without the Bc1, and that means attacking without the Ra1! Because White has been so obvious, Black can easily organise a defence. But you must organise one - just developing without thinking will let White carry out the plan. Don't be in a hurry to castle into an attack!

One nice idea is

2. ..., ♞f6 3. ♔d3 ♘c6!

Now:

4. f4 ♘b4! 5. ♔e2 ♔f5!

4. c3 e5!

If this is not your style, another nice idea is 3. ..., g6, which stops the Bxh7 trick, or play 3. ..., ♔g4 with the idea of ...e6 and ...Bf5! or 3. ..., g6 with the idea of ...Bf5.

Oskum - Euwe Scheveningen, 1920

1.d4 d5 2.e3 ♘f6 3.♔d3 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.f4 ♔g4 6.♞f3 e6 7.♘bd2 ♔d6 8.g3 ♖c8 9.O-O ♘d7 10.♖e1 O-O 11.e4 c×d4 12.♘×d4 ♖b6 13.♖f2 e5 14.e×d5 ♘e7 15.f×e5 ♘×e5 16.♔e4 f5 17.♘e6 f×e4 18.♖×b6 ♖×f1+ 19.♕×f1 a×b6 20.♘×e4 ♔b8 21.♘f4 ♖d8 22.♔e3 ♘c4 23.♔d4 ♔×f4 24.g×f4 ♘×d5 25.b3 ♘ce3+ 26.♕f2 ♘c2 27.♖g1 ♘×d4 28.c×d4 ♔f5 29.♕f3 ♔×e4+ 30.♕×e4 ♘c3+ 31.♕d3 ♘b5 32.♕c4 ♘×d4 33.♖d1 b5+ 0-1

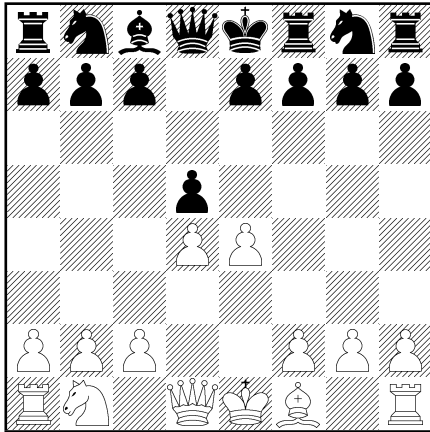
Example game

Provaznik,M - Klimus,V [D00] Moravia op ch, 1994

1.d4 d5 2.e3 ♘f6 3.♔d3 c5 4.c3 c4 5.♔c2 ♘c6 6.f4 ♔g4 7.♞f3 ♖d7 8.O-O e6 9.♘bd2 ♔e7 10.h3 ♔h5 11.♖e1 ♔g6 12.♔×g6 h×g6 13.♘e5 ♖c7 14.♘df3 ♘e4 15.♔d2 ♖h6 16.b3 ♘a5 17.b4 ♘c6 18.♘g4 ♖h7 19.♞ge5 ♔f6 20.♖b1 ♔×e5 21.f×e5 ♘e7 22.♖b2 ♘f5 23.♖fe1 ♘fg3 24.♖eb1 g5 25.♘h2 f5 26.♔e1 g4 27.♔×g3 ♘×g3 28.h×g4 f×g4 29.♘×g4 ♖f7 30.♘h2 ♖h5 0-1

2.2.5 Blackmar-Diemer Gambit

1. d4 d5 2. e4



♖b6

White thinks the time is right to blast a way through to the Black King, but...

16. ♖×f6 g×f6 0-1

... 17. ♕×f6 ♖d8!

None of my own work: I read it all in a book.

The idea behind the opening

White hopes that Black will take this Pawn and the f-Pawn, giving White extra time and open lines for an attack.

This can work very well:

Sawyer T - Overman A [D00] corr USCF Golden Knights SF, 1990

1.d4 d5 2.e4 d×e4 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.f3 e×f3 5.♗×f3 g6 6.♕c4 ♕g7 7.O-O O-O 8.♞e1 ♗bd7 9.♞h4 e6 10.♕g5 ♞e8 11.♞ae1 c6 12.♗e5 ♗d5 13.♗e4 ♗×e5 14.d×e5 ♗h8 15.♕×d5 1-0

How to play against this opening

This opening works so well because most club players are rubbish at defence. So, to play against it, you either need to become better at defence then accept the gambit, or decline it and hope you haven't let White get away with anything else.

If you play the French Defence as Black, there can be no arguing with 2. ..., e6, transposing into your main defence to 1.e4. Or, you can decline it with moves like 4. ..., ♕f5 or 4. ..., e3, or accept it with 4. ..., e×f3 5. ♗×f3.

I have a feeling the best way is to take it, but don't castle into an attack, first have a hack at the White centre.

Example game

Drueke,V - Regis,D [D00] Section P01 BDG Email Tourney (1), 01.07.1997

1.d4 d5 2.e4 d×e4 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.f3 e×f3 5.♗×f3 e6 6.♕g5 ♕e7 7.♕d3 c5 8.d×c5 ♞a5 9.O-O ♞xc5+ 10.♗h1 ♗bd7 11.♞e1 a6

We know have a little dance where Black tries to swap off Queens, and White tries to trap the Black Queen. All this costs White another Pawn.

12.♞h4 ♞b4 13.♗d4 ♞×b2 14.♗ce2 ♗e5 15.a4