

Mini-Lessons From Short Games Of 21st Century

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NOSTALGIA

There is only one reason why I collected and am showing the games presented in this article: nostalgia! These games remind me of my younger years when I posted the Bishop on c4, or moved the f2 pawn to f4(or both!) with the idea to quickly pounce on f7, the weakest square around the opponent's King. Believe me, it was an exciting time!

However, when I saw the following recent games, I was surprised how these old and almost forgotten openings still lead to very interesting and highly emotional chess, even after all these years.

C25 P. Hommerson – J. Klein Douwel

Helmondsee 2000

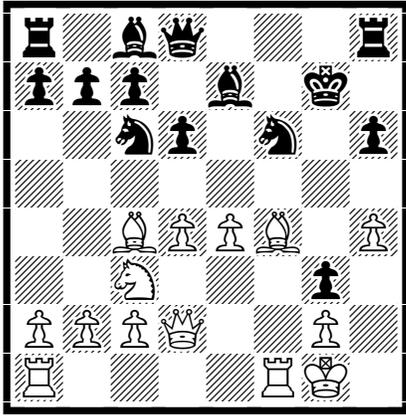
1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4 exf4 4.Nf3 g5 5.h4 g4 6.Ng5 d6

Considered better is the immediate 6...h6 7.Nxf7 Kxf7 8.d4 and not 8...d6, but 8...d5.

7.d4 h6 8.Nxf7 Kxf7 9.Bc4+ Kg7?

Clearly Black is not familiar with the history of this continuation. A long, long time ago Bilguer recommended 9...Kg6! 10.Bxf4 Bg7.

10.Bxf4 Be7 11.O-O Nf6 12.Qd2 g3



13.Bg5! Nxd4

If 13...hxg5 14.Qxg5+ Kf8 15.Qg6 Qe8 16.Rxf6+ and White wins.

14.Nd5!!

This wins by force. But not 14.Qxd4 hxg5 15.hxg5? Rh1+! 16.Kxh1 Qh8+ and mate on the next move.

14...Ne2+ 15.Bxe2 Nxd5 16.Qxd5 Qe8 17.Bd2 Rf8 18.Bc3+ Kh7 19.Bh5 Rxf1+ 20.Rxf1 1-0

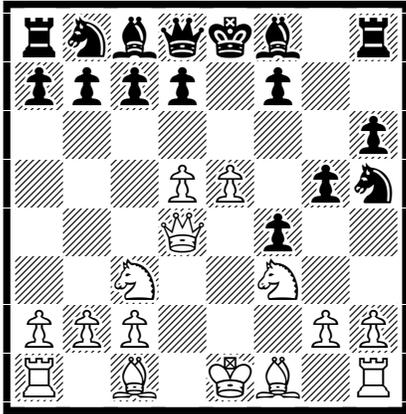
C25 M. Lyell – E. Kislik
Budapest 2009

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4 exf4 4.Nf3 h6?

Black tries to play ideas from two different variations. After Nc6, the move h6 is a waste of time, and probably is the decisive mistake! The theory recommends 4...g5, and 5.d4 g4.

5.d4 g5 6.d5 Nb8 7.Qd4 Nf6 8.e5 Nh5

Now, with so many tempi ahead, White opens the position.



9.g4! fxc3

The alternative 9...Ng7 10.h4! is even worse.

10.hxc3 Nxc3 11.Bxc5 Be7 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.Rg1 Nf5 14.Qe4 d6 15.Bh3

Black is already lost.

15...Na6 16.Bxf5 Nc5 17.Qg4 h5 18.Qg7 Qf8 19.Bxc8 Rxc8 20.0-0-0 1-0

C25 D. Pruess – A. Moreno

San Francisco 2009

1.e4 e5 2.f4 Nc6 3.Nc3 exf4 4.d4

The sharpest and most risky continuation.

4...Qh4+ 5.Ke2 d5 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.exd5 0-0-0 8.dxc6 Nf6!?

The book main line is 8...Bc5, which is unclear.

9.cxb7??

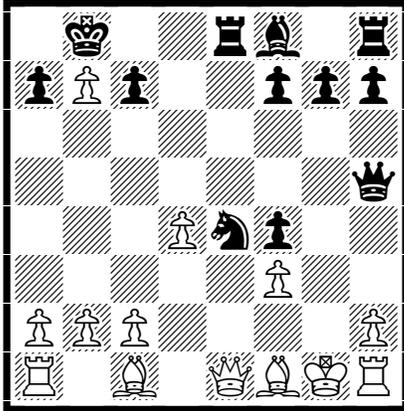
As we shall see later, this is the decisive mistake! Correct is the immediate 9.Qe1.

9...Kb8 10.Qe1 Bxf3+ 11.gxf3 Re8+ 12.Ne4 Qh5 13.Kf2 Nxe4+!

Now this is winning because of the mistake 9.cxb7?? – see next note.

14.Kg1

If 14.fxe4 Qh4+ 15.Ke2 Rxe4+ and Black wins the Queen. However, if Black's King is on c8, then it is possible to play 15.Kf3! Qxe1 (15...Qh5+ =?) 16.Bh3+!



14...Bb4 15.Qxb4 Qxf3 16.Qe1 Ng3 0-1

C29 B. Valentine – D. Curry
England (Team ch) 2005

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4 5.d3

This variation of the Vienna Game has existed for more than one hundred years and still produces new strategic ideas.

5...Nxc3 6.bxc3 d4

Considered obligatory by theory.

7.Nf3 Nc6 8.Be2 Bg4

After 8...dxc3 9.d4 Bg4 10.Be3 White has good attacking chances as compensation for the pawn because of the center and f-file!

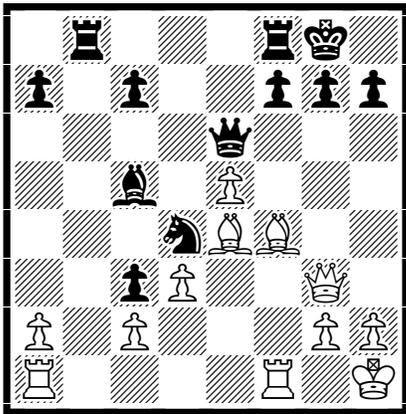
9.O-O Bc5 10.Kh1!?

Instead of 10.c4, White follows the more promising idea of a pawn sacrifice.

10...O-O 11.Bf4 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 Qd7 13.Qe1 dxc3 14.Qg3 Nd4

Maybe 14...Rfe8, intending 15...Bf8, is the better defense.

15.Bxb7 Rab8 16.Be4 Qe6



17.Bg5! Ne2 18.Qh4 g6 19.Bf6 Rfe8 20.Rf3 Qxa2? 21.Qxh7+! 1-0

C29 G. Antal – I. Tillet
Paris 2000

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4 5.Qf3 f5 6.Nh3

Who can remember the correct reply against this rare and very old continuation?

6...Bc5?! 7.d3 Nxc3 8.bxc3 d4 9.Bg5 Be7?

It looks ugly, but probably Black should try 9...Qd7, and if 10.Nf4 O-O.

10.Qh5+ g6? 11.Qh6 dxc3 12.Qg7 Rf8 13.Qxh7 Rf7 14.Qg8+ 1-0

C51 M. Krakops – S. Azarov
Bled (ol) 2002

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4

The Evans Gambit, already more than two hundred years old, is still a very dangerous weapon!

4...Bb6

Black does not accept the gambit. This means either that he is not a bold player or, most likely, that he doesn't remember anything about the theory of this opening.

5.b5 Nd4

Instead of the more common 5...Na5 6.Be2 etc.

6.Nxd4

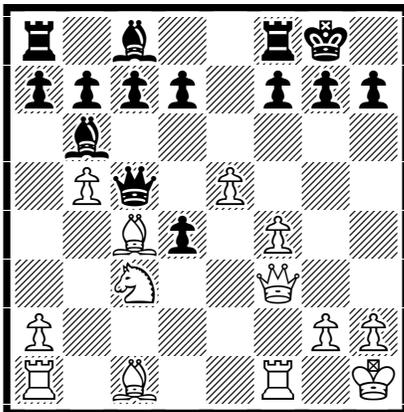
But not 6.Nxe5? Qg5!

6...Bxd4 7.c3 Bb6 8.d4 Qe7 9.O-O Nf6 10.f4 exd4

If 10...d6, then 11.Ba3 looks very strong.

11.e5 Ne4 12.Kh1 O-O 13.Qf3 Nxc3 14.Nxc3 Qc5?

Obligatory was 14...dxc3.



15.Nd5! Qxc4 16.f5 Re8 17.f6 d6 18.fxg7 1-0

C52 C. Baker – S. Collins
Sunningdale 2009

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 exd4

Recent theory considers 6...d6 to be Black's best defense.

7.O-O Nge7 8.Ng5?

It seems that in this game, Black is the better prepared player. This premature attempt for an immediate attack leads to disaster. Usual is 8.cxd4 d5 9.exd5 Nxd5 etc. and White has compensation for the pawn.

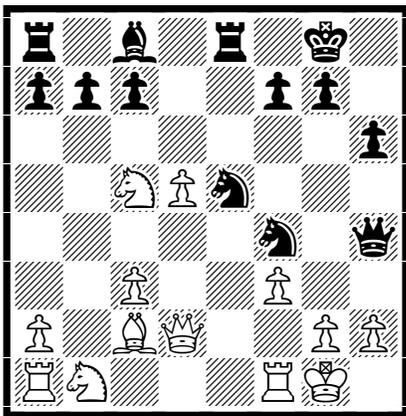
8....d5 9.exd5 Ne5 10.Bb3 O-O 11.Qxd4 N7g6 12.Bc2 Bb6 13.Qd2 h6 14.Ne4 Qh4

Already Black stands better.

15.Ba3 Re8 16.Bc5 Bxc5 17.Nxc5 Nf4

The threat is 18...Nf3+! 19.gxf3 Qg5+

18.f3



18...Nxf3+! 19.Rxf3 Re1+ 0-1

Because of 20.Rf1 Ne2+.

C57 D. Khalat – P. Lasinskas
Bad Homburg 2005

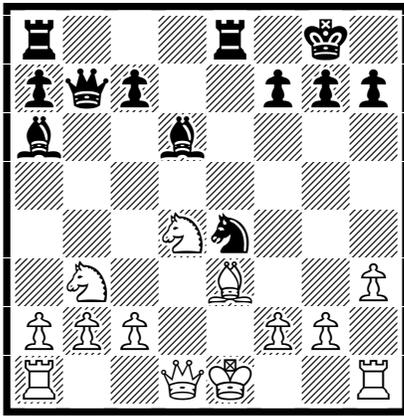
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 b5

This is a continuation that was popular in 1950's. In my opinion, it is at least as good as the play that is most often used in practice: 5...Na5.

6.Bxb5 Qxd5 7.Bxc6+ Qxc6 8.Nf3 Bd6 9.d3 O-O 10.h3?

Development is needed. This kind of waste of time usually turns out to be a mistake, and here it is the decisive mistake! Necessary was 10.O-O.

10...e4 11.dxe4 Ba6! 12.Be3 Nxe4 13.Nbd2 Rfe8 14.Nd4 Qb7 15.N2b3



15...Nxf2! 16.Kxf2 Rxe3 0-1

After 17.Kxe3 Qxg2 there is no defense against the threat 18...Re8+.

C57 L. Cernousek – J. Kratochvil
Strmilov 2005

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Nd4

Another rare and controversial continuation. It seems that in these old variations it is frequently Black who introduces surprises.

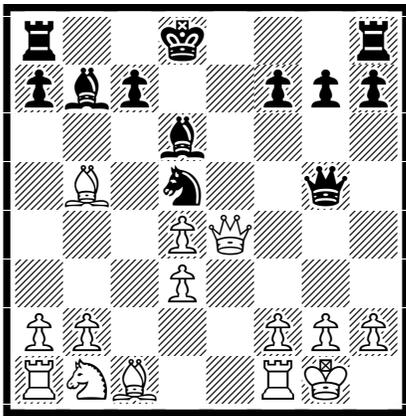
6.c3 b5 7.Bf1 Nxd5 8.cxd4

The theory recommends 8.Ne4!

8...Qxg5 9.Bxb5+ Kd8 10.Qf3 Bb7 11.O-O

The exciting variation 11.Nc3 exd4 12.O-O Qf4 13.Qh3 Nf6, in my opinion, is unclear.

11...e4 12.Qxe4? Bd6 13.d3



14...Bxh2+! 14.Kxh2 Nf4 15.Bxf4

Or 15.Qxb7 Qh4+ 16.Kg1 Ne2#

15...Qh4+ 16.Kg1 Bxe4 17.Bg3 Qh5 0-1