

Mini-Lessons From Short Games Of 21st Century

By IM Nikolay Minev

New Adventures in the English Opening

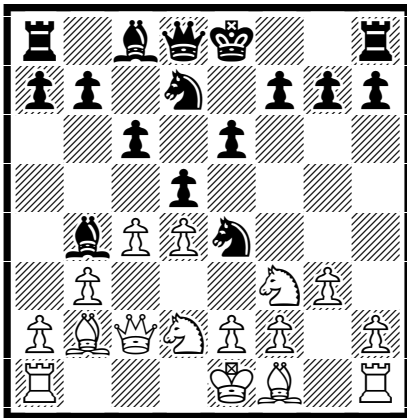
Variations without c7-c5 or e7-e5

Our first two games demonstrate that many obvious, “automatic” moves end up being a mistake!

A13 Liang Chong - Li Shilong
Peking 2001

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 c6 3.b3 Nf6 4.Bb2 e6 5.Qc2 Nbd7 6.d4 Ne4 7.g3 Bb4+ 8.Nbd2??

This move is usually played automatically, but in this case is a fatal mistake. Correct is 8.Nfd2!



8...Qf6!!

The refutation is not an obvious move and should be remembered. There is no good defense against the threat 9...Bxd2+ 10.Nxd2 Qxf2+.

9.Rd1 Bxd2+ 10.Rxd2 Nxd2 11.Qxd2 O-O 12.Bg2 Qe7 13.O-O b6 0-1

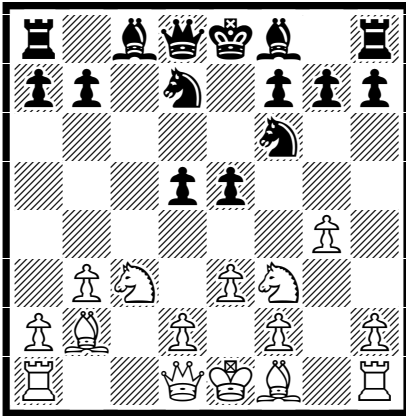
A15 D. Flores – A. Shabalov

Buenos Aires 2005

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 d5 4.e3 e6 5.b3 Nbd7 6.Bb2 e5!?

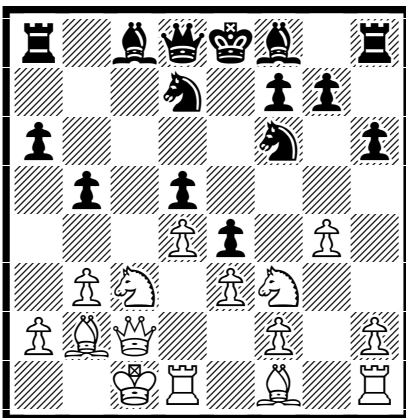
Possession of the center – achieved with loss of tempo – is an ambitious, but also controversial, plan in the opening.

7.cxd5 cxd5 8.g4!?



An adventure, chosen instead of 8.d4!?, and if 8...e4 9.Ne5.

8...h6 9.Qc2 a6 10.O-O-O b5 11.d4 e4



12.Nxd5??

At first glance, a move with obvious tactics. Who would think that it should lose!

12...Ra7

The surprising refutation. However, after 12...Nxd5 13.Qxe4+ Be7 14.Qxd5 Qc7+ 15.Kb1 Bb7 16.Qf5 g6 Black also wins.

13.g5 Nxd5 14.Qxe4+ Qe7 15.Qxe7+

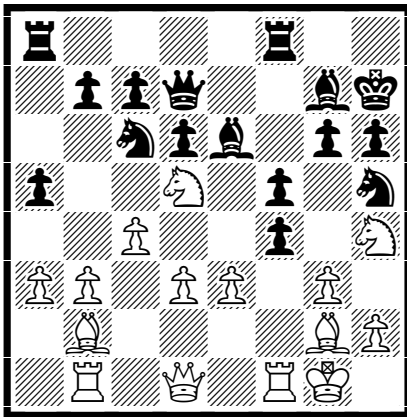
If 15.Qxd5 Rc7+ 16.Kd2 Bb7 17.Qf5 Be4 and 18...Rc2+.

15...Bxe7 16.g6 fxe6 17.Kb1 O-O 18.Bg2 Bb7 19.Rhg1 Ba8 0-1

The next games are showcases for some interesting sacrifices of the Queen.

A15 K. Spraggett – P. Llaneza Vega
San Sebastian 2007

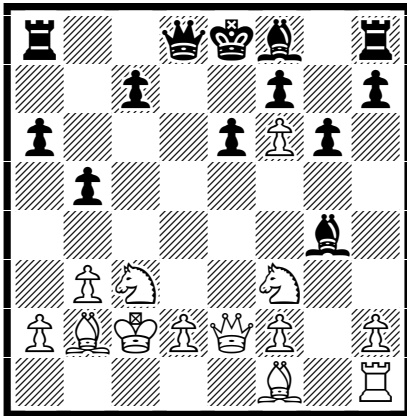
1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.b3 Bg7 4.Bb2 O-O 5.Bg2 d6 6.c4 e5 7.d3 Nc6 8.O-O h6 9.Nc3 Nh5 10.e3 f5 11.a3 a5 12.Rb1 Be6 13.Nd5 Qd7 14.Nh4 Kh7 15.f4 exf4?



16.Nxg6!! Kxg6 17.Qxh5+!! Kxh5 18.Nxf4+ Kg5 19.h4+ Kg4 20.Kh2 1-0

A16 M. Krasenkov – V. Mikhalevsky
Saint Vincent (Europe ch) 2000

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Qa4+ Bd7 5.Qb3 dxc4 6.Qxc4 a6 7.e4 b5 8.Qe2 Nc6 9.e5 Nb4? 10.exf6 Nc2+ 11.Kd1 Nxa1 12.b3 Bf5 13.Bb2 Nc2 14.g4 Bxg4 15.Kxc2 e6



16.Qxb5+! 1-0

Variations with c7-c5

This game shows the age-old theme that losing tempi by grabbing pawns in the opening is usually a bad idea!

A30 E. Romanov – M. Molner
World Junior Championship Yerevan 2007

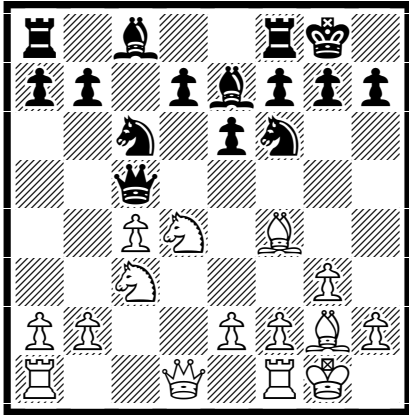
1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.Nc3 e6 4.g3 Be7 5.Bg2 O-O 6.O-O Nc6 7.d4 cxd4

Instead 7...d5 transposes into the Tarrasch Defense.

8.Nxd4 Qa5

A new idea?

9.Bf4 Qc5?



Grabbing a pawn when you are behind in development is always dangerous! As we shall see very soon, this leads to fatal consequences.

10.Ndb5 Qxc4 11.Rc1 Qb4 12.a3 Qa5

After 12...Qxb2? 13.Rb1 Black loses the Queen.

13.b4 Qb6 14.Nc7 Rb8 15.Na4 Qd4 16.Qc2 b5

Not much better is 16...Nh5 17.Nb5.

17.Rfd1 Nxb4 18.axb4 Qxb4 19.Nc3 d6 20.N7xb5 1-0

Variations with e7-e5

A King remaining in the center is always in danger.

A21 F. Tahirov – A. Shirov

Villa de Canada de Calatrava (Spain) 2007

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Bb4 3.Qc2

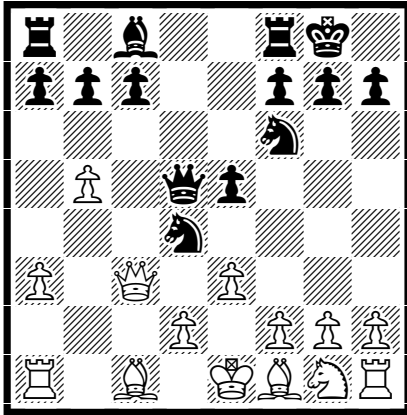
As the practice shows, 3.Nd5 Ba5 4.b4 c6 5.bxa5 cxd5 6.cxd5 Qxa5 is not in White's favor. For example 7.e4 Nf6 8.Qc2 O-O 9.Ne2 Na6 10.Nc3 d6 11.Be2 Bd7 12.O-O b5

13.Bb2 Nc5 14.d3 Rac8 15.Qb1 b4 16.Nd1 Bb5 17.Re1 Qa6 0-1 W. Wengenroth – A. Orlov, Germany 2005

3...Nf6 4.a3 Bxc3 5.Qxc3 Nc6 6.b4?! O-O 7.e3 d5 8.cxd5 Qxd5 9.b5?

Too many moves with pawns! The trouble comes immediately.

9...Nd4!



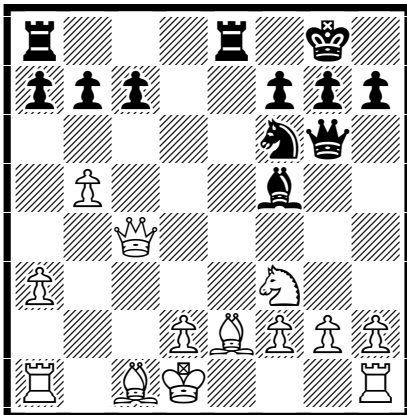
10.exd4 exd4 11.Qc4 Re8+ 12.Kd1 Qh5+ 13.Be2 Qg6 14.Nf3 Be6 15.Qc2 d3!

A typical sacrifice of a pawn for the opening of a file. Now Black wins by force.

16.Qxd3

Or 16.Bxd3 Qxg2.

16...Bf5 17.Qc4



17...Rxe2!! 18.Nh4

If 18.Kxe2 Re8+ 19.Kd1 Qxg2 and wins, or 18.Qxe2 Bd3 19.Qe3 Re8 20.Qxe8+ (20.Ne5 Qh5+) Nxe8 and, as in the game, Black should win because White's pieces are without coordination.

18...Qh5 19.Qxe2 Bc2+ 20.Ke1 Re8 21.Qxe8+ Nxe8 0-1

For if 22.Nf3 Qg4 and Black wins.

A21 I. Lada - I. Glek

Bad Worishofen 2001

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Bb4 3.Nd5 a5!?

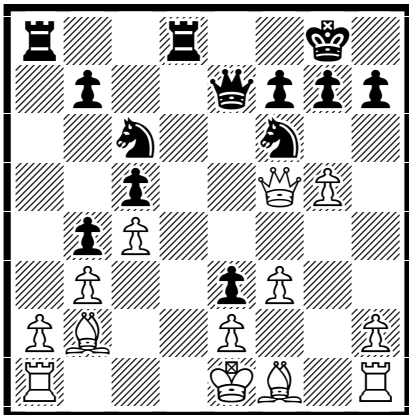
An experiment which deserves attention!

4.Nxb4?! axb4 5.d4 d6 6.b3 Qe7 7.Bb2 Nf6 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.Nf3?!

Provocation!

9...e4 10.Nd4 e3! 11.f3 O-O 12.Qc2 c5 13.Nf5 Bxf5 14.Qxf5 Nc6 15.g4 Rfd8 16.g5?

Now White's King in the center is an easy victim. Obligatory was 16.Bg2.



16... Qd6! 17.Qc2 Ne4! 18.Bc1

If 18.fxe4 Qf4!

18...Qd2+! 0-1

The main winning variation is 19.Bxd2 exd2+ 20.Kd1 Nf2#

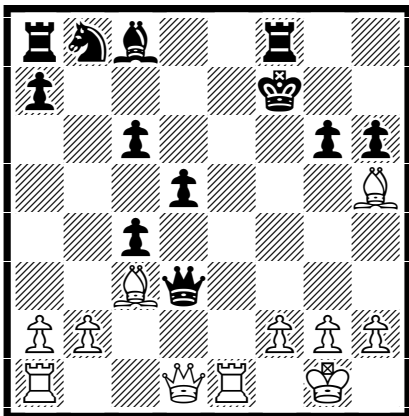
A22 J. Grant – J. Kregelin

Dresden 2007

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 e4 4.Ng5 b5 5.d3!

This is considered the refutation of Black's dubious gambit.

5...bxc4 6.dxe4 h6 7.Nxf7! Kxf7 8.e5 c6 9.e4! d5 10.exf6 Qxf6 11.Be3 Bb4 12.Bd4 Qf4 13.Be2 Qxe4 14.O-O Bxc3 15.Bh5+ g6 16.Bxc3! Rf8 17.Re1 Qd3

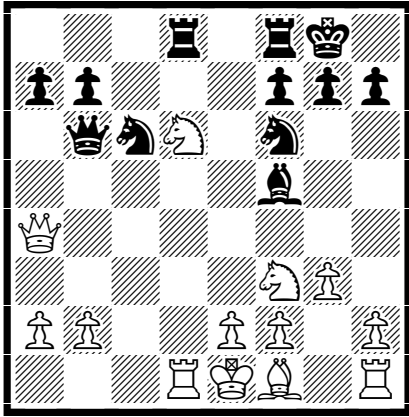


18.Qc1! gxh5 19.Qxh6 d4 20.Bb4 1-0

A23 K. Tsarouhas – V. Kotronias

Greece (ch team) Ermioni Argolidas 2005

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 c6 4.d4 exd4 5.Qxd4 d5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.Nf3 Nc6 8.Qa4 d4
 9.Nb5 Bb4+ 10.Bd2 Bxd2+ 11.Nxd2 O-O 12.Nf3 d3 13.Rd1 Qb6 14.Rxd3 Bf5 15.Rd1
 Rad8 16.Nd6



16...Nb4!! 17.Nxf5 Qa5!! 18.Rxd8 Rxd8 0-1

A23 Kapostas – Kallai
 Hungary (ch team) 2001

1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.Nc3 d5 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.Qb3 Nc6 7.Nxd5 Nd4 8.Qa4+?

The critical variation is 8.Nxf6+ Qxf6 9.Qd1.

8...Bd7 9.Nxf6+ Qxf6 10.Qd1 Rc8 11.Rb1

If 11.Kf1 Qa6!

11...Qa6! 12.b3

If 12.a3?? Ba4!

12...Bb4! 13.Bb2

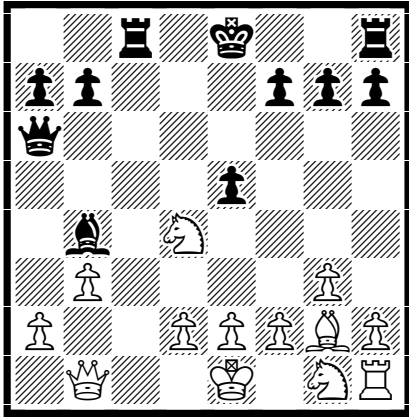
13.Nf3 Bf5! And wins.

13...Bf5 14.Bxd4?

The decisive mistake. Relatively better was 14.Rc1.

14...Bxb1 15.Qxb1

Or 15.Bc3 Bxa2! 16.Bxb4 Bxb3.



15...Qxa2!! 16.Qb2 exd4!! 0-1

For if 17.Qxa2 Rc1#

Next, an example of “murder on the h-file”.

A25 Franco – Akopian

Linares 2001

1.c4 e5 2.g3 Nc6 3.Bg2 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 d6 6.Nge2 Nge7 7.O-O h5!?

The opening of a strategy of direct attack!

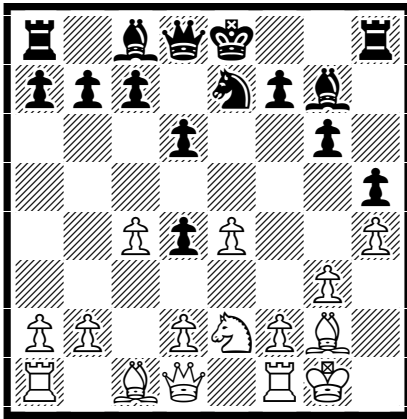
8.h4

8.h3!?

8...Nd4 9.Nxd4?!

9.d3!?

9...exd4 10.Ne2



10...g5! 11.hxg5 d3! 12.Nf4 h4 13.Nh5

Critical is 13.g4 Nc6 14.Nh3 Nd4 15.f4 Be6.

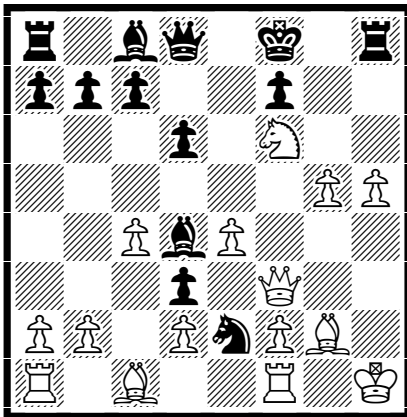
13...Bd4 14.Nf6+

If 14.gxh4 Ng6.

14...Kf8 15.gxh4

Or 15.g4 Ng8

15...Ng6! 16.h5 Nf4 17.Qf3 Ne2+ 18.Kh1



18...Bxf6 0-1

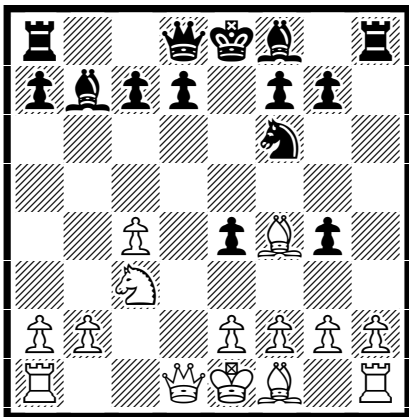
For if 19.gxf6 Qe8! 20.Bh3 Bxh3 21.Qxh3 Qxe4+ 22.f3 Qf4 23.Re1 Rxd5 24.Qxd5 Ng3+ and Black wins.

A28 Efimenko – Z. Arizmendi
Gibraltar 2006

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.d4 e4 5.Ng5 h6 6.d5

The alternative is 6.Ngxe4 Nxe4 7.Nxe4 Qh4

6...hxg5 7.dxc6 g4!? 8.cxb7?! Bxb7 9.Bf4



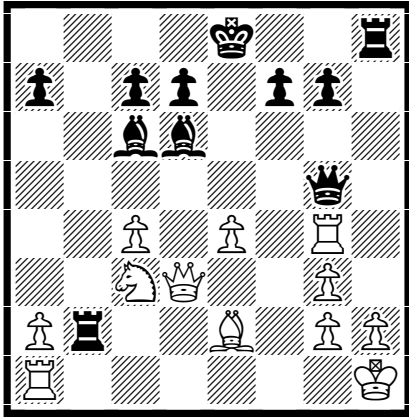
9...e3!? 10.Bxe3 g3 11.fxg3 Ng4 12.Qd4

It may look ugly, but perhaps White should try 12.Bg1 Bd6 13.Qd3.

Nxe3 13.Qxe3+ Be7 14.Qd3 Rb8 15.e4 Bc6 16.Be2?

16.O-O-O!? is unclear.

16...Rxb2 17.O-O Bc5+ 18.Kh1 Qg5 19.Rf4 Bd6 20.Rg4



20...Rhx2+!! 21.Kg1

If 21.Kxh2 Qh5+ 22.Kg1 Bc5+ 23.Kf1 Qh1#

21...Qc5+! 0-1

Because of 22.Kxh2 Qh5+ and Black forces mate as in the previous note. But not 21...Bc5+?? 22.Kxh2!