

THE NEW WINAWER REPORT

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Issue 11

November 19, 2013

ISSN 2326-1757

Gambit Games—I

Of the various side lines available to White to bypass the critical main lines of the Winawer, one with an enduring respectability is the 4 ♞e2 variation. White avoids the doubled c-pawns that are a feature of virtually every other Winawer line and—at least for its most common continuation throughout most of its history—steers the game in a quieter, positional direction.

Yet the variation was initially conceived as a gambit, and to this day it's a genuine one that may be accepted. "There is not a single true chess-player whose heart does not beat faster at the mere sound of such long beloved and familiar word as 'gambit games'", says Bronstein; and so this issue and the next cover the lines where Black accepts the offer.

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The Alekhine (or Maróczy) Gambit Accepted

Ponce, Rousseau, DuBois & Stark-

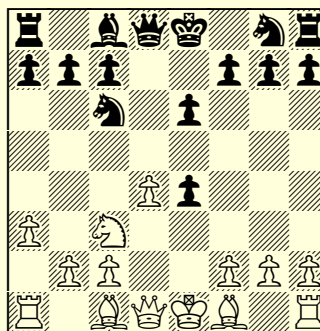
Lasker, Wimsatt Sr., Eaton & Mutchler
Consultation game, Washington 1938
Washington Post, 23 January 1938 p. TS-14
(*Turover*)

1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3 ♞c3 ♞b4

4 ♞e2 dxe4
5 a3 ♞xc3+
6 ♞xc3 ♞c6! (1)

The immediate 6 ... f5?!, as in Maróczy-Seitz, Győr 1924 (1-0, 37) and Alekhine-Nimzovitch, Bled 1931 (1-0, 19), is considered too risky. The text received an early endorsement from Alekhine: 'the correct reply which secures

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W



Black at least an even game is 6 ... ♞c6! and if 7 ♞b5 then 7 ... ♞e7 followed by ... 0-0, etc.' *MBG-2 p. 94*.

But for many decades theory did not agree, considering this as giving White an edge, and preferring 5 ... ♗e7, retaining the two bishops, e.g. Euwe *TdSE-2 p. 66*, Schwarz *dFV p. 173*, Pachman *P68 p. 59*, Keres *SbF-2 p. 288*, Gligorić & Uhlmann *RHM pp. 16-17* and Moles & Wicker *MAL p. 221*.

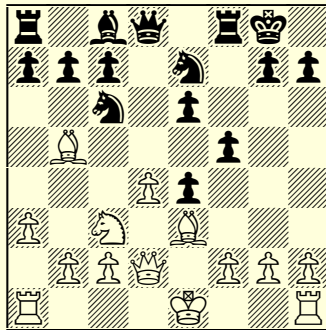
- 7 ♗b5 ♖e7
- 8 ♗e3

Later considered less accurate than the finesse 8 ♗g5 f6 9 ♗e3, provoking a weakness. But the difference is marginal.

The first (and only previous?) game with 6 ... ♗c6!, **Lasker-Kan, Moscow 1936**, went 8 0-0? (too slow) 8 ... 0-0 9 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 10 d5?! (10 ♗f4?) 10 ... exd5 11 ♖xd5 ♗d4! 12 ♗g5 ♖xd5 13 ♗xd5 ♗e6?! (13 ... ♗g4?) and ½-½, 25.

- 8 ... 0-0
- 9 ♖d2 f5(2)

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- 10 f3 exf3
- 11 gxf3 e5
- 12 d5?!

Better 12 ♗c4+ ♖h8 13 d5, as suggested by Moles & Wicker *MAL p. 220* ('White has plenty of play'), probably with balanced chances. Compared to the game, after 13 ... f4 14 ♗c5 ♗d4 (Watson *PtF-4 p. 188* analyses 14 ... b6!?) 15 0-0-0 ♗ef5?! 16 ♗xf8 ♖xf8

White has the extra possibility 17 ♗b5!±.

- 12 ... f4!
- 13 ♗c5

Turover thought 13 dxc6 would have given 'drawing chances' (implying that the move played did not?). Then 13 ... fxe3 14 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 15 cxb7 ♗xb7 16 0-0 ♖d2± is quite uncomfortable.

- 13 ... ♗d4
- 14 0-0-0 ♗ef5
- 15 ♗xf8?

On 15 ♖f2?, as in **Rogulj-Lindgren, Pula Open 2011** (in effect: transposition from 8 ♗g5 f6 9 ♗e3), instead of 15 ... ♗xb5?!± (and 1-0, 42), Watson gives 15 ... ♖f7! 16 ♗c4 ♗e3±.

Better 15 ♖e1!, e.g. 15 ... ♗e3 (15 ... ♗xf3 16 ♖e2 ♗5d4 17 ♖xd4=) 16 ♗xd4 exd4 17 ♖xd4 ♗f5±.

- 15 ... ♖xf8
- 16 ♖f2 ♗e3

± Watson, though ± seems equally plausible.

- 17 ♖d2?

Natural, but the losing move. White must instead give up the exchange: 17 ♗d3 ♗f5 18 ♗e4 ♗xd1 19 ♖xd1±.

- 17 ... ♗f5
- 18 ♗a4

Now 18 ♗d3 is too late. **Branford-Wiley, British Championship, Edinburgh 1985**, continued 18 ... ♗xd3 19 ♖xd3 ♗exc2±± 20 ♗e2 ♖c5?! (20 ... ♖d8) 21 ♖b1 ♖xd5 22 ♖c1? (22 ♗xf4!±) 22 ... ♖b5 and 0-1, 31.

- 18 ... ♖c5!
- 19 ♖xd4 exd4
- 20 ♗e4 ♖e7
- 21 ♗b3 ♖h8
- 22 ♗d2 a5
- 23 a4 b5

0-1

All quite convincing; why would the line ever have been considered questionable? Later games saw Black try some weaker plans, and the theory manuals ignored Lasker's consultation game.

* * *

From (2), and for consistency adopting the most common move order 8 ♖g5 f6 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 ♚d2 f5, White has two main possibilities:

A: 11 f3

B: 11 0-0-0 (next issue)

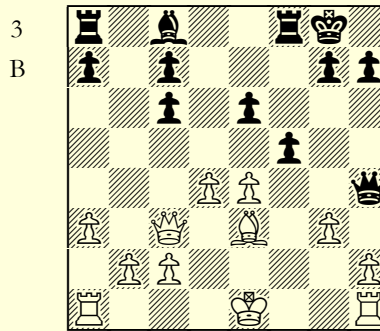
A1: (from (2)) 11 f3, Black plays ... ♗d5

Black's main defences involve either ... e5 or ... ♗d5.

a) 11 ... ♗d5: An early and influential example was **Pachman-Bondarevsky, Chigorin Memorial, Moscow 1947**, which went 12 ♗xc6 ♗xc3?! 13 ♚xc3 bxc6 14 ♗f4 ♚d5 15 0-0-0 (± Pachman *P68 p. 59*) 15 ... ♗d7 (15 ... ♗f7±) 16 ♗xc7 ♗e8 17 ♗e5± (1/2-1/2, 41). Black is hardly at a severe disadvantage but has no positive prospects.

Better 12 ... bxc6, when 13 fxe4 may be met most simply by Watson's 13 ... fxe4! 14 0-0-0 ♗xc3 15 ♚xc3 ♚d5=, though this has never been played.

Instead Black has usually tried 13 ... ♗xc3 14 ♚xc3 ♚h4+ 15 g3(3) ♚xe4, though 16 0-0-0± leaves White with some advantage, e.g. **Povah-Bernat, Hoogovens B, Wijk aan Zee 1981** (1-0, 41), **Opicci-Diotallevi, Italian corr Ch 1989** (1-0, 57) and **Weill-Prié, Cannes Open 1992** (1-0, 52). Here the attempted improvement (from (3)) 15 ... ♚g4!?, as in **Gómez Baillou-Bernat, Argentine U26 Ch, Pehuajó 1983** (1/2-1/2, 23), prevents White from castling long, planning 16 0-0 ♚xe4 and ... ♗b7 with play on the



long diagonal; about equal. After 16 exf5!? White appears to have an edge, e.g. 16 ... ♖xf5 17 ♚d2 ♗d7 18 ♖ae1 and 19 ♚c1±.

b) 11 ... exf3 12 gxf3 ♗d5: Another early game, **Pilnik-Donner, Hoogovens Beverwijk 1951**, continued 13 ♗xc6 ♗xe3?! 14 ♚xc3 ♚h4+ 15 ♚f2 ♚xf2+ 16 ♚xf2 bxc6, and now instead of 17 ♗a4 e5 (and 1-0, 53), theory considered that 17 ♖he1 gave White some advantage (± Dempsey *AG p. 19*). The advantage is small (±/=) but Black is passively placed. Better 13 ... bxc6=.

A2: (from (2)) 11 f3, Black plays ... e5

This theme has appeared in several forms other than 11 ... exf3 12 gxf3 e5:

a) 11 ... e5: (Rare.) White secures an edge after 12 d5 ♗d4 13 ♗xd4 exd4 14 ♚xd4 c6 15 ♗c4 cxd5 16 0-0-0 or 12 ... f4 13 dxc6! (13 ♗c5?! e3±).

b) 11 ... f4 12 ♗xf4 ♚xd4 13 fxe4 e5: Vitiugov's suggestion *aCBR p. 172*, and a straightforward way to (a sterile) equality. It dates back to **Pilnik-Martín, Mar del Plata 1950**, which went 14 ♗g3 ♚xd2+ 15 ♚xd2 ♗e6= (1/2-1/2, 69).

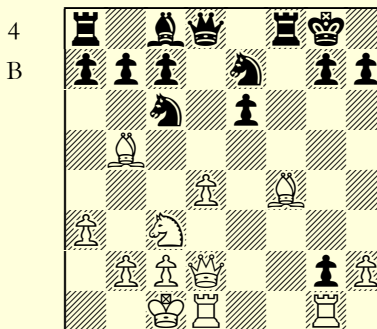
c) 11 ... a6 12 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 13 fxe4 e5: 14 d5 ♗a5 15 b3 ♚d6=, **Westerinen-**

Welin, Rilton Cup, Stockholm 1987 (½-½, 43), and 14 dxe5 ♖xd2+ 15 ♜xd2 fxe4=, **Seret-Dimitrov, Cappelle Open 1989** (½-½, 17) each give equality.

A3: (from (2)) 11 f3, Black plays ... exf3 and ... fxg2

After 11 f3 exf3, White may try the double gambit **12 0-0-0!?**. Dempsey *AG p. 19* thought it was too dangerous to accept: 12 ... fxg2 13 ♜hg1 'gives White a dangerous initiative'. But Watson *PtF-4 p. 188* analyses further: 13 ... ♔d5 14 ♖xg2 g6 15 ♘g5 ♗d6, which is ♞: White has clear compensation, but not enough for two pawns.

This double gambit never seems to have been tried, but there are several examples once Black has played ... f4. After 11 ... f4 12 ♘xf4 exf3 13 0-0-0 gxf2 14 ♜hg1 (4), with only a single pawn sacrificed and the square e4 now available, it is White who stands better. Now 14 ... e5? should lose after 15 ♖xg2 ♔f5 16 dxe5±±, e.g. 16 ... ♖e8 17 ♔d5 ♗f7 18 ♘c4 ♘e6, **Rapoports-Lettl, DDR/FS/84/96 corr 1984** (½-½, 20) and **Holzhäuer-Duppel, Oberliga Wuert '97-'98 1998** (0-1, 30), and now 19 ♔f6+ ♜h8 20 ♜d7! is crushing, though



strangely this was missed in both examples. Better 14 ... ♔d6, e.g. 15 ♘g5 ♗d6 16 ♜xg2?! (16 b4!±; 16 ♖xg2?! ♔xd4 17 b4 ♗c5? 18 b5±± and 1-0, 33, **de Greef-Harmsen, Oisterwijk (Women) 1990**; 17 ... ♔f4!∞/±) 16 ... e5 17 ♔b5 ♗d7 18 d5 ♔ce7? (19 ... a6!∞/±) 19 d6± (19 b4!±±) **Zimmer-Abel, St. Ingbert Open 1987** (1-0, 39).

So Black should not accept the gambit in this form; better 13 ... e5=.

Conclusion: Both the ... ♔d5 and ... e5 approaches give full equality, and no more, with accurate play. Of Black's many satisfactory choices, though, none improves on Lasker's consultation game.

Next issue: 'the modern' 11 0-0-0. ►

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