

THE NEW WINAWER REPORT

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Gambit Games—II

T rue gambits need startling victories if they are to inspire: games in which the defender appears to make no obvious mistake but falls victim to a storm from a clear blue sky.

It is fair to say that the lines of the Alekhine gambit accepted that were considered in the last issue fall short in this regard. They are sound, certainly, and leave White no worse; but after all Black can equalise in a number of ways and is hardly in real danger.

The situation is rather different in the modern version: with an innocuous-seeming alteration in the setup, the stage is set for devastating attacks. Almost imperceptibly, White slips the lead into the boxing glove ...

* * *

The Alekhine (or Maróczy) Gambit Accepted—Modern Version

Braakhuis-Neven

WC.2000.S.00001 IECG corr 1999

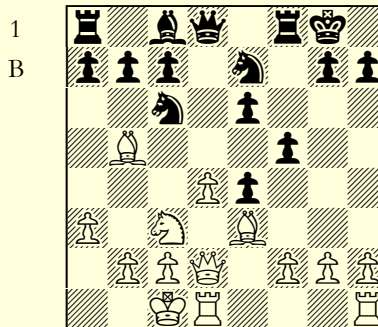
(*Braakhuis (via UltraCorr3)*)

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 ♘e2
dxe4 5 a3 ♙xc3+ 6 ♘xc3 ♘c6! 7 ♙b5
♘e7 8 ♙g5 f6 9 ♙e3 0-0 10 ♚d2 f5

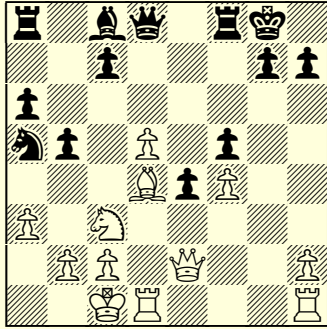
11 0-0-0(1)

‘The modern preference’, Dempsey *AG p. 20*, in contrast with ‘the hasty’ 11 f3, Vitiugov *aCBR p. 172*. White forestalls the immediately equalising ... f4 and completes development. Black is short of useful ways to use the tempo.

11 ...	a6
12 ♙xc6	♘xc6
13 f3	exf3



14 gxf3	e5
15 d5	♘a5
16 ♚e2	b5
17 f4	e4

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B

18 ♕d4(2) ♖c4?

‘As it turns out, this is the losing move!’, Braakhuis; ‘incredible!’

19 ♗h5! ♖d6?

Black could have defended more resiliently with 19 ... g6, planning 20 ♖hg1 ♖f6 followed by ... ♖b8-b6. Even that may be winning for White; still clearer is 20 ♗h6 ♖f6 21 h4±±.

20 ♖hg1 ♖f7

Losing immediately, but 20 ... ♗e8 21 ♖g3 and 22 ♖dg1 is also hopeless.

21 ♗xe4!!

A deflection sacrifice of the f-pawn, so that 21 ... fxe4 may be met by 22 ♗xg7! (22 ... ♖xg7 23 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 24 ♖g1+ and the king has no haven on h8).

0-1

Braakhuis gave 18 ... ♗d6? as the only defence, continuing 19 ♗e5 ♗h6 20 ♗xc7 ♗c4 ‘∞’. But here 19 ♖hg1 is again winning: 19 ... ♗xf4+ 20 ♗b1 is hopeless after 20 ... g6 21 ♗h5 ♗d6 22 ♗h6 ♖f7 23 ♖df1 or 20 ... ♖f7 21 ♗h5 ♗d7 22 ♖df1 ♗d2 (22 ... ♗d6 23 ♗xe4) 23 ♗e2! followed by ♖d1 trapping the queen, while 19 ... g6 (or ♖f7) 20 ♗h5 is not so different to the game.

Instead the right way is 18 ... ♗h4! =, e.g. 19 ♖df1 g6 followed by ... ♖f7 and ... ♗b7.

If White plays 18 ♗h5 to forestall this possibility, Black has time for (18 ... ♗e8 19 ♗h3) ♖f6 =.

* * *

From (1), each side has several plausible ways of diverging from the main game:

11 ... a6

Instead 11 ... ♗d5, while playable, is usually not recommended as after 12 ♗xd5! (best; 12 ♗xc6 ± Schwarz *dFV p. 174* leaves White with inadequate compensation) 12 ... exd5 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 14 ♗f4 ‘although Black may not have much chance of losing, he has absolutely no chance of winning’, Psakhis *ICF p. 196* (± Miles). The position is objectively equal but has significantly favoured White in practice; cf. for example **Barrios Troncoso-Strautiņš, Jacques Joudran Memorial A corr 2002** (1-0, 31).

12 ♗xc6 ♗xc6

Now White has two major approaches:

B1: 13 ♗g5

B2: 13 f3

Others pose no threat. The natural-looking 13 ♗f4 was introduced in **King-Menzel, World U16 Team Ch, Viborg 1979 BCM 1980 p. 265** (*King*), (in no database), with success after 13 ... ♗e7 14 f3 exf3 15 gxf3 ♗g6? (15 ... b5=) 16 ♗g5 ♗d6?! (conceding a tempo after White’s later ♗f4; better 16 ... ♗d7±) 17 h4 ♖f7 18 h5 ♗f8 19 ♗f4± ♗d8 20 ♖dg1 ♗d7 21 ♖g3 ♗f6 22 ♗e5 ♗d7 23 ♗f4? (23 b6! ♗xe5 24 hxc7!±) 23 ... ♗f6 24 ♗g5? ♗d7? (Black has almost weathered the storm: 24 ... c5!∞/=) 25 ♖hg1 ♗h8? (25 ... ♗e7±) 26 ♗e2!±± c5 27 ♗f4

h6 28 ♖g6+ ♜h7 29 ♗e5 ♖e7 30 ♗xf6 gxf6 31 ♜g2! 1-0.

King thought 13 ... b5 14 d5 ♗e7 15 dxe6 ♗xe6 16 ♜xd8 ♖fxd8 17 ♗xc7 ‘gives White the better ending’, but this seems fully equal. An even simpler solution is to give back the pawn to close off e5, which stops White dead in his tracks: 13 ... e5! 14 dxe5 ♜xd2+ 15 ♖xd2 ♗e6=, **Ambrož-Ivarsson, Prague Bohemians 1980** (½-½, 28) and others.

B1: 13 ♗g5

Another move with a spectacular début: White recorded a crushing victory in **Miles-Reefschläger, Porz 1981-82 Informator 33/418 (Miles)** after 13 ... ♜e8? 14 f3 exf3 15 gxf3 ♗d8? (Miles gives 15 ... e5 16 dxe5 ♗e6 followed by ... ♖/7±) 16 ♖hg1 c6 (16 ... e5, again suggested by Miles, is now met by 17 ♗d5±±) 17 ♖g3 ♖f7? (better 17 ... b5, Miles; e.g. 18 ♖dg1 ♖a7 19 ♗f4 ♖/6±) 18 ♖dg1 b5 19 ♗f6! 1-0. (The game’s move order was 8 ♗e3 instead of 8 ♗g5 f6 9 ♗e3, saving one move.)

13 ... ♜d7!

Much more to the point, covering g7, c7, and d5.

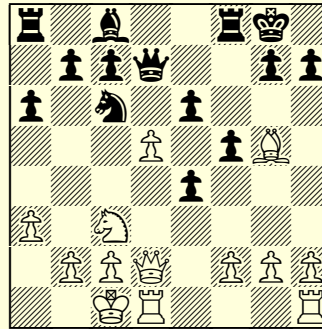
14 d5(3)

After 14 f3 exf3 15 gxf3 e5 16 d5? the bishop is misplaced, allowing 16 ... ♗d4 17 ♜f2 f4. Watson *PtF-4 p. 188* gives 16 dxe5! ♜xd2+ 17 ♗xd2 ♗e6=. But then the whole line is wrong for White.

14 ... ♗e5!

After 14 ... exd5?! 15 ♗xd5 ♜f7 16 ♗f4 White recovers the pawn with a small edge. **Hector-Faragó, Hamburg Ch 2004** continued 16 ... ♗e6 17 ♗xc7 ♖ad8 (17 ... ♖fd8?! 18 ♗xa8!±) 18 ♜c3 ♖c8 19 ♗xe6 ♜xd6 20 ♖d6 ♜a2 21 ♖hd1± (1-0, 40).

3
B



Instead 14 ... ♗e7 is playable though unambitious, e.g. 15 dxe6 ♜xe6 16 f3 h6 17 ♗f4 (17 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 18 fxe4 fxe4= **Westerinen-Thompson, Gausdal Classics GM-B 2006** (0-1, 40)) 17 ... ♜c6 18 ♖he1 ♗g6 19 fxe4 ♗xf4=.

After the text, sources differ: Vitiugov gives 15 f3 ♗c4 16 ♜e2 b5 17 fxe4 ♗b7 18 exf5 exd5 ‘with double-edged play’; Watson says that Black ‘has somewhat the better of it’ in the final position (♞).

Examples:

a) 15 ♜d4 ♗f7?! 16 dxe6 ♜xe6 17 ♗f4 c6= and ½-½, 34, **Moreno Ramos-Negele, WT/MN/035 ICCF corr 1996** (via transposition). Better 15 ... ♜d6.

b) 15 ♜e3 ♜f7= 16 f3?! h6?! 17 ♗f4 ♗g6?!= **Morais-Musitani, EM/OL14/G3/B4 ICCF corr 2000** (½-½, 35); better 16 ... exd5! 17 ♗xd5 ♗d3+♞, an important resource.

c) 15 f3 b5 (15 ... exf3?! 16 ♖he1±; 15 ... ♗f7?! 16 fxe4±; 15 ... ♗c4 16 ♜d4 b5 17 fxe4 e5∞/=) 16 fxe4 fxe4= 17 ♜e2? ♗f7? (17 ... exd5! 18 ♗xd5? ♗d3+♞; 18 ♖xd5 ♜f5 19 ♗e3 ♗b7) 18 ♗e3 ♗b7= **Hector-S.B. Petersen, 27th Politiken Cup 2005** (1-0, 48).

Overall Black has nothing to fear.

B2: 13 f313 ... **exf3**

Alternatively, and perhaps preferably, 13 ... e5 (!? Uhlmann *WntF* p. 150, Psakhis) declines the gambit, but is better if Black plans ... ♠a5: (13 ... e5) 14 d5 ♠a5 15 ♗c5 may be met by 15 ... ♠c4 16 ♖e2 ♠d6= **Hartmann-Hertneck, Bundesliga '88-'89 1989** (0-1, 48).

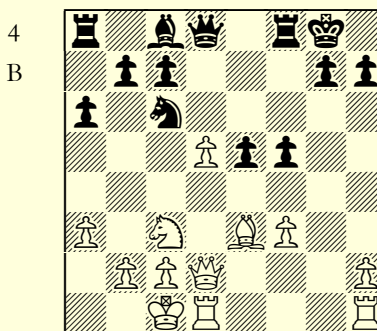
On the usual 15 ♖e2 (!? Uhlmann, McDonald *FW* p. 120), 15 ... exf3 16 gxf3 b5 reaches the main game, while 15 ... b5 16 fxe4 f4 17 ♗c5 ♖f7 18 d6 c6= is solid though with few positive prospects, e.g. **Wiemer-Bischoff, West German Ch, Bad Neuenahr 1984** (½-½, 51). Instead 15 ... b6 16 fxe4 f4 17 ♗d2= gives more chances to play for a win, e.g. **Stripunsky-Shulman, US Ch, St. Louis 2010** (0-1, 45).

14 **gxf3** **e5**

'With at least equality', Moles & Wicker *MAL* p. 220.

15 **d5(4)** **♠a5?!**

This concedes an advantage. Better 15 ... ♠e7!, with balanced chances, as attested by practical tests, e.g. 16 f4 exf4 17 ♗xf4 ♠g6 18 ♗g5 ♖d6 19 h4 h6 20 h5= **Ginzburg-Gorovykh, Russian Ch Higher League 2010** (½-½, 33) or 16 ... ♠g6 17 fxe5 ♠xe5 18 ♖hg1 ♖f7∞/= **Paljušaj-B. Kovačević, Zadar Open A 2010** (0-1, 38).

16 **♖e2?!**

Instead 16 b3!? ♖d6 17 f4!? (17 ♖b2 f4=), as in **Morozov-Nienhuis, Kirjeshakki-25 GM corr 1987-91**, introduces complications, but 17 ... ♖xa3+ 18 ♖b1 exf4 19 ♗xf4 ♖f7 20 ♖hg1 ♠xb3!?, with four pawns for the knight, should be acceptable for Black.

Best is 16 ♗c5! ♖f7 17 ♖he1 b6 18 ♗b4 ♠c4 19 ♖e2± (cf. 18 ♗d2?! ♠c4= **Walek-Totsky, České Budějovice Open 1993** (0-1, 33)).

16 ... **b5**
17 **f4** **exf4!?**

Even simpler than the main game, e.g. 18 ♗d4 (18 ♗xf4 ♠c4=) 18 ... ♠c4 19 ♖hg1 ♖f7 20 ♖h5 ♠e3=.

Conclusion: 11 0-0-0 is more dangerous, but is still equal with best play. ►

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