

Playing the Queen's Gambit

– a grandmaster guide

By

Lars Schandorff



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Preface

This book provides White with a hard-hitting repertoire against all Black's answers to 1.d4 d5 2.c4, the Queen's Gambit, including classics like the evergreen Queen's Gambit Declined, the highly fashionable Slav, and the rather obscure Chigorin.

The repertoire is based entirely on big mainlines, which guarantees its reliability and strength. Firstly, you cannot expect to get anything against well-respected openings like the Queen's Gambit Accepted and the Semi-Slav by trying a little sideline or just by playing safe. The main lines, on the other hand, have not become main lines by chance. They have slowly but surely evolved and proved their strength over the years, so by choosing main lines you gain reliable weapons.

Secondly, the main lines are sharp and put the maximum pressure on the opponent, both theoretically and in practice. This corresponds perfectly with the philosophy behind this work, which is that White should strive for the initiative and show that moving first matters. Developing the pieces fluidly to active squares and trying to take the centre with pawns to seize space – these are key elements in the various White set-ups presented here.

Playing White is like serving in tennis. I remember when I started to play a few years ago – tennis that is! – a good friend of mine explained that the serve should be a great offensive weapon. Actually this is quite a cruel thing to tell a beginner, because the serve is by far the most difficult stroke in tennis. But it is true of course, and the right attitude. With a good serve you either win directly or, if the opponent manages to return the ball, at least you get the chance to take the initiative and dictate the rest of the duel.

In this book I offer you an excellent first serve. And it will be an effective offensive weapon, I promise that. But every tennis player knows that it is important to have a decent second serve as well. This may also be true in chess, especially in this computer age, so having a safe alternative is a good idea. Thus, throughout the book I offer hints of where you could devote some of your further investigations.

Enough. Let's hit the engine and start rolling – I hope you enjoy the films, the songs and the moves.

Lars Schandorff
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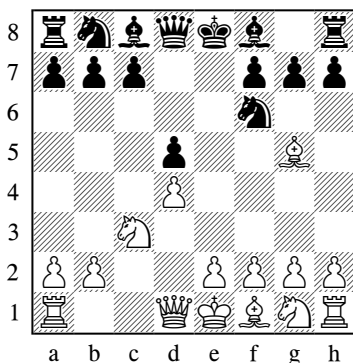
Introduction to the Repertoire

I have explained the principles of the repertoire – aggressive reliable mainlines that seize space – but after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 how does that translate into moves? Against some openings the choice seems obvious, in others there are several possible lines that could fit the bill. Where there was a real choice I have used my judgement to select the most principled continuation – no compromises!

Let's take it one opening at a time in the order I have arranged the chapters:

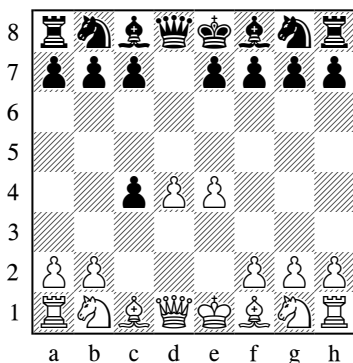
Chapter 1: Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 Against the **Queen's Gambit Declined** my choice is: 4.cxd5 exd5 Critical, yes, but how does it take space? The answer is that in many of my lines White will later play f3 and e4. 5.♙g5 The great Botvinnik will be our guide of how to play this line.



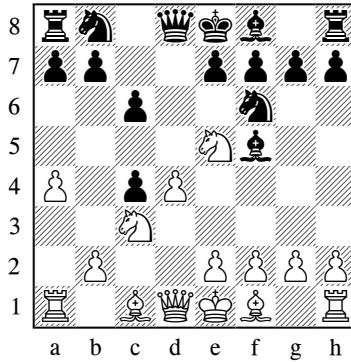
Chapter 2: Queen's Gambit Accepted

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 The **Queen's Gambit Accepted** is a tough opening to meet, but it is obvious my space-gaining choice must be: 3.e4 Black has various ways to challenge White's central dominance, so we will leave the details till later.



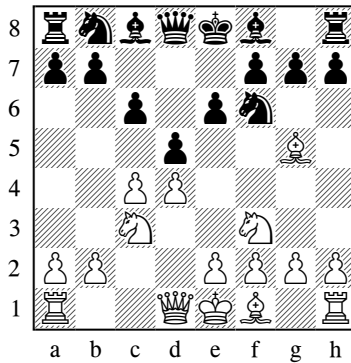
Chapter 3: The Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♙c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♕f5 Naturally, Black also has moves such as 5...♗g4, 5...♘a6 and 5...e6, and I cover them all. But 5...♕f5 is the mainline of the **Slav**, and I answer with the mainline: 6.♘e5 As against the Queen's Gambit Declined, I will usually build my centre with f3 and e4.



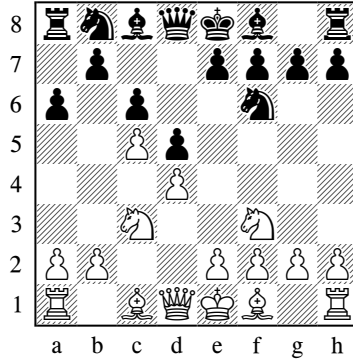
Chapter 4: The Semi-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♙c3 e6 The **Semi-Slav** will be met by the most aggressive reply: 5.♗g5 Naturally if Black takes on c4 then White seizes the centre with e2-e4.



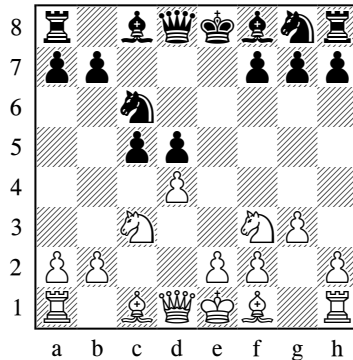
Chapter 5: The a6-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♙c3 a6 Against the **a6-Slav** achieving e2-e4 is more difficult (though it will happen in one of my key lines!). This time I claim a space advantage by playing: **5.c5** At this point Black has a choice, so we will leave further explanation to the chapter itself.



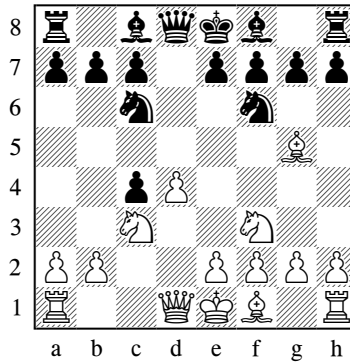
Chapter 6: The Tarrasch

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♙c3 c5 The **Tarrasch** is the joker in our pack: White will not have a space advantage but we will have easy development and the sounder pawn structure by following the main line: **4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3** White's play will be more about control, whereas the rest of the repertoire is more attacking.



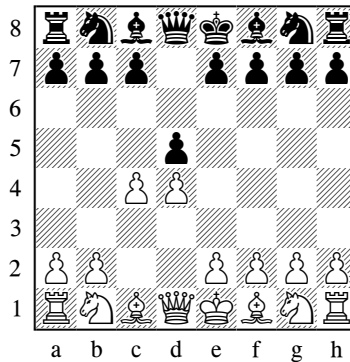
Chapter 7: The Chigorin

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♘c6 In the **Chigorin** Black chooses piece-play over supporting his centre, so it is relatively easy for us to secure a space advantage – the trick is to find an accurate move order that limits Black's counterplay. My solution is: **3.♘c3 ♗f6 4.♗f3 dxc4** Now **5.e4** looks like our kind of move, but it allows Black to play **5...♗g4**, so I opt to develop first with: **5.♗g5** This is an old favourite of mine, and I will show how to use it as an effective weapon.



Chapter 8: Minor Lines

The final chapter is a hotchpotch of minor lines.



The lines covered include the Triangle Variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6), the Albin Counter-Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5) and the Von-Hennig-Schara Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4). Naturally this chapter also covers many other lines, as this is a complete repertoire.

I have explained the ideas behind the repertoire and shown a few moves, so it's time to dive into the details.