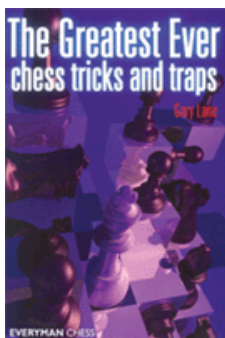




COLUMNISTS

Opening Lanes

Gary Lane



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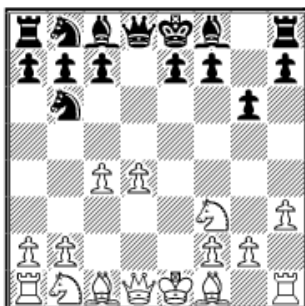
Havana Gold

There are so many people who avoid the main lines that it sometimes comes as a surprise when an opponent obligingly allows one to play his prepared moves. This is what **Roberto Suárez** from **Cuba** thought until he was stunned by a new move in the Scandinavian.

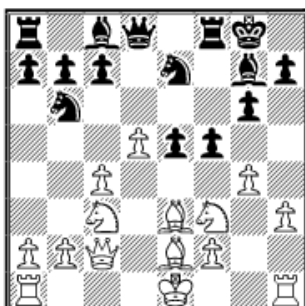
He writes, "I saw your [February 2006](#) article about the Scandinavian, where you analyze the line 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 d4 Nxd5 4 c4 Nb4. It was very interesting. Now, I have started to play the Scandinavian as black. In a recent game I lost with the line 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 d4 Nxd5 4 Nf3 g6 5 c4 Nb6 6 Nc3 Bg7 7 h3 0-0 8 Be3 Nc6 9 Be2 e5 10 d5 Ne7 11 g4 f5 12 Qc2 fxg4 13 hxg4 Nd7 14 0-0-0 Qe8 15 Nb5. After 4 Nf3, the line with ...Nb4 is not so good. The move that particularly upset me was 11 g4. It made ...f5 more complicated for me, because of Ng5 and it is not good to prevent it with h6, as it will create a weakness on my kingside. How should black play in this line with 11 g4?"

Gallna Breslavskaya - Oksana Vozovic Odessa 2006

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 d4 Also possible is 3 c4 when there are a couple of main lines available: a) 3...c6 4 d4 cxd5 5 Nc3 transposes to the Panov-Botvinnik attack a variation of the Caro-Kann. b) 3...e6 is known as the Icelandic Gambit and is a favourite of specialist Scandinavian players who want to win. 3...Nxd5 4 c4 Nb6 5 Nf3 g6 6 h3



This is needed at some stage to put a stop to ...Bg4, especially because Black aims to put pressure on the d4-pawn. 6...Bg7 7 Nc3 0-0 8 Be2 Nc6 9 Be3 e5 This is one of the main lines of the Scandinavian and the break with the e-pawn is an important element in preventing Black's pieces from becoming too constrained. 10 d5 Ne7 11 g4 This is certainly a critical line because White prevents a knight from occupying the f5-square and invites a surge by Black with ...f7-f5. In the game M.Tal-B. Gurgeni, Moscow 1959, White proceeded modestly with 11 0-0 when peace was announced upon 11...h6 12 Qd2 Nf5 13 c5 Nxe3 14 fxe3 Nd7 15 b4 a5 16 a3 axb4 17 axb4 Rxa1 18 Rxa1 e4 19 Nd4 Qh4 20 c6 (after 20 Ra8, then 20...Be5 is sharp because it exploits the weak dark squares around the white king) 20...bxc6 21 dxc6 Ne5 22 Rf1 Bxh3 23 gxh3 ½-½. 11...f5 12 Rg1!? The reader Mr. Suárez is concerned about 12 Qc2



It is certainly intriguing, because it is a rare move in this position. His game went 12...fxg4 13 hxg4 Nd7 14 0-0-0 Qe8 15 Nb5! and understandably Mr. Suárez went on to lose with the black pieces. I know that 12 Qd2 is popular, so Black should take a similar course of action in reply to White's novelty in the opening and against a queen being on c2 try 12...e4. For instance, 13 Nd4? (this is fine in the 12 Qd2 line, but here it is a mistake) 13...f4! 14 Ne6 Bxe6 15 Bxb6 axb6 16 dxe6 f3 17 Bd1 e3 gives Black a great game. Or 13 Ng5 is the best chance for White, when a sample line runs 13...h6 (at first sight I liked 13...c6 to chip away at the advanced d-pawn, but 14 d6! is very irritating for Black) 14 Ne6 Bxe6 15 dxe6 when 15...Qc8 is a test of White's line in view of the danger to the e6-pawn. 16 gxf5 Nxf5 (16...gxf5 is not so convincing for White because

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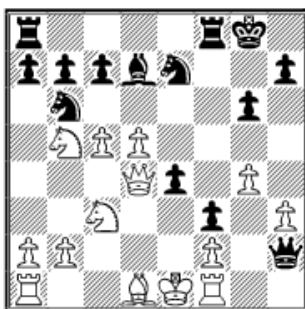


[A Strategic Opening Repertoire](#)
 by John Donaldson & Carsten Hansen

of 17 0–0–0! when the open g-file for White’s rooks are bad news for the safety of the black king) 17 e7! Nxe7 18 0-0-0 with a sharp middlegame, which is what Black wants from the opening. a) 12 Qb3 e4 (or 12...Nd7 13 0–0–0 f4 14 Bd2 Nc5 15 Qa3 b6 16 b4 Nb7 when White has a slight edge) 13 Ng5 h6 and now a1) 14 Ne6 Bxe6 15 dxe6 c6 (I prefer 15...f4! when 16 Bc5 f3 17 Bd1 Bd4 offers equal opportunities) 16 Bc5 Rf6 17 Rd1 Qe8 18 Bxe7 Qxe7 19 c5 Nd5 20 Rxd5 cxd5 21 Nxd5 Qxc5 (or 21...Qxe6? 22 Nxf6+ Kf7 23 Bc4 winning) 22 0–0 fxe4 23 hxe4 Rff8 24 e7 Rf7 25 Bb5 Bd4 26 e8Q+ Rxe8 27 Bxe8 Rf3 28 Nf6+ 1–0, B.Kohlweyer-G.Heisel, German Team Championship 2005. a2) 14 d6 cxd6 15 c5+ d5 16 cxb6 hxe4 17 Bxe6 Be6 18 gxf5 gxf5 19 Nb5 axb6 20 Rg1 Qd7?! (20...f4!? looks like a better idea) 21 Bh6 Rf7 22 Bh5 Kh7 (maybe 22...Raf8 is a more stubborn defence, but it is certainly no fun for Black) 23 Bxf7 Bxh6 24 Bxe6 Qxe6 25 Nc7 Rg8 26 Nxe6 Rxe6 27 Ke2 Rxa1 28 Qxb6 f4 29 f3 Nf5 30 fxe4 Ng3+ 31 Kf3 dxe4+ 32 Kg4 e3 33 Qxb7+ Kg6 34 Qc6 Kh7 35 Qc2+ Kh8 36 Qg6 1–0, S.Khukhashvili-N.Melashvili, Tbilisi 2009. b) 12 Qd2 e4 when play might continue b1) 13 Nh2?! (this looks like an odd square for the king’s knight when White is supposed to be attacking) 13...Nd7 (13...Bd7 intending ...Na4 with roughly level chances) 14 0–0–0 Ne5 15 Bh6 Bxh6 16 Qxh6 b6 17 h4 (17 f3! looks like a good idea to me) 17...fxg4 18 h5 Nf5 19 Qd2 gxf5 20 Nxe4 Nd6 21 Nxd6 cxd6 22 f3 gxf3 23 Nxf3 Nxf3 24 Bxf3 Rxf3 25 Qg2+ Bg4 26 Rxh5 Rf4 27 Rdh1 Rxc4+ 28 Kb1 Qf6 0–1, M.Malo Quiros-J.Ivanov, Algarve 1999. b2) 13 Ng5 h6 14 Ngxe4 (14 Ne6 is more obvious with equal chances) 14...fxe4 15 Nxe4 Nxd5 (15...Qe8 to hang on to the extra piece is surely worth trying) 16 cxd5 Qxd5 17 Qc2 Be6 18 0–0 Nc4 when Black has the slightly better chances although the game eventually ended in a draw, S.Sulskis-K.Zolnierowicz, Pardubice 1994. **12...e4 13 Nd4** 13 Ng5 h6 14 Ne6 Bxe6 15 dxe6 Qc8 16 gxf5 Rxf5 (I suspect 16...Bxc3+!? is worth considering in view of 17 bxc3 Rxf5 18 Bxh6 Qxe6 with equal opportunities) 17 Qb3 Qxe6 18 0–0–0 with compensation for the pawn. **13...Qd6**



The queen on d6 can be useful to put off the advance c4-c5, but also to introduce the idea of the queen occupying the h2-square **14 Ndb5 Qh2 15 Rf1** An amusing idea is 15 Kd2? to connect the rooks, but Black emerges on top after **15...f4 16 Bc5 f3! 17 Bxe7 fxe2 18 Qe1 Rxf2** winning. 15...f4 The combination of a pawn surge with e5-e4 and f5-f4 is an important aspect of Black’s attack in this line. **16 Bd4** I suspect 16 Bxb6 is required to seek equal chances when 16...axb6 17 d6 cxd6 18 Qxd6 Nc6 19 Qd5+ Kh8 20 Qxe4 and Black’s onslaught has been blunted. **16...Bxd4** Maybe 16...f3 is stronger in view of 17 Bxg7 fxe2 18 Qxe2 Kxg7 19 Qxe4 Rf7 20 0–0–0 c6 with double-edged play. **17 Qxd4 f3 18 Bd1 Bd7 19 c5**



19...e3! This is a scintillating move to play because it is bound to cause White to consume lots of time thinking of a suitable defence. **20 cxb6** If 20 fxe3, Black can step up the pressure: 20...Bxb5 21 Nxb5 Qg3+ 22 Kd2 Qg2+ 23 Ke1 Nbxh5 with the advantage. **20...e2 21 Bxe2 fxe2 22 Kxe2 Rae8** The obvious threat is a discovered check and White needs to take evasive action. **23 Kd1 axb6 24 Nxc7** I would be tempted just to play 24 Kc2 and then ask Black to prove his slight advantage. **24...Qxc7 25 d6 Rd8** Or 25...Nc6 26 Qd5+ Be6 27 Qxe6+ Rxe6 28 dxc7 winning. **26 Kc1?** After 26 dxc7 Ba4+ 27 Ke2 Rxd4 28 Ke3 Rdf4, Black is doing fine. **26...Be6 27 dxc7** Perhaps 27 Rd1 looks like a better choice. **27...Rxd4 28 Nb5?! Rd7 29 b3 Bd5 0–1**

Kamogelo Mmusi from **South Africa** e-mailed, “I really like the Catalan opening when I am playing white. Can you please help me with some theory of this opening?”

This is a big subject so I need some precise moves as a guide to what you really want. If Mr. Mmusi or anybody has questions about the opening, then send them in now and I will endeavour to cover the subject more

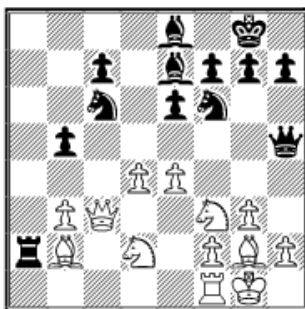
fully in next month's column. In the meantime I present one of my favourite games in this opening:

Vladimir Kramnik - Jeroen Piket Dortmund 1995

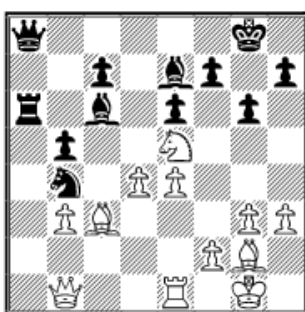
1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 e6 3 g3 A sign that the opening is a Catalan. **3...Nf6 4 Bg2 Be7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 dxc4 7 Qc2 a6 8 a4 Nc6** Also possible is 8...Bd7 9 Qxc4. **9 Qxc4 Qd5 10 Nbd2 Rd8 11 e3**



11...Qh5 Black decides to avoid the ending, which is known to give White a small initiative. For instance, 11...Bd7 12 Ne5! Qxc4 13 Ndx4 Nxe5 14 Nxe5 Bc8 (14...Nd5 15 Bd2 gives White a slight but lasting advantage) 15 Bd2 Bd6 16 Nc4 Ra7 17 e4 Ne8 18 Rfc1 b6 19 a5 b5 20 Ne3 f6 the problem for Black in such positions is that you have to have plenty of skill and patience not to become bored and lash out with an attempt to create counterplay 21 b4 Kf7 22 f4 e5?! 23 fxe5 fxe5 24 Bc3 Be7 25 dxe5 c5 26 Nd5 cxb4 27 Bd4 Ra8 28 Rf1+ 1-0, H.Kelchner-K. Hesselbarth, Halle 2004. **12 e4** The advance of the pawn controls the d5-square and consequently stops the black queen from returning to that square. **12...Bd7 13 b3 b5!?** Piket is an energetic player and seeks some counterplay before Kramnik has it all his own way. **14 Qc3** Or 14 axb5?! axb5 15 Qc3 Bb4 16 Qb2 Rxa1 17 Qxa1 Bxd2 18 Nxd2 e5 favours Black. **14...Be8** Or 14...bxa4 15 bxa4 Bb4 with equal opportunities. **15 axb5! axb5!?** It is more precise to try 15...Bb4! when 16 Qc2 Qxb5 17 e5 Nd5 gives White a small plus. **16 Rxa8 Rxa8 17 Bb2 Ra2**

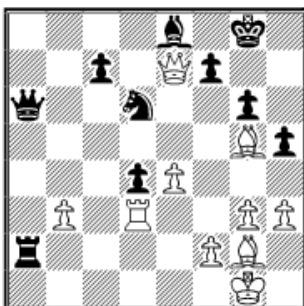


18 Qc1! Kramnik could also try 18 Ra1 Rxa1+ 19 Bxa1, but he said after the game that he preferred to keep the rooks on because "... for the side with a spatial advantage it is unfavourable to exchange pieces." **18...Qh6** 18...Nb4? is useless because of 19 Qxc7; maybe the line 18...b4 19 Qb1 Qa5 20 Nc4 Qa7 21 Rd1 Nd8 is worth considering for Black. **19 h3 g6!** It might look crazy, but you have to admire the Dutch grandmaster for his amusing queen manoeuvre. **20 Re1** 20 Rd1! also looks promising. **20...Qf8** Once again 20...Nb4? falls victim to 21 Qxc7! with the advantage. **21 Qb1 Nb4 22 Ne5 Nd7?!** It is not wise to exchange such a good defender of the kingside. Instead 22...Ra6! is a solid, sensible alternative when White still has plenty to do to convert his small edge into victory. **23 Bc3! Ra6** Instead 23...Nxe5? is wrong in view of 24 Bxb4 Bxb4 25 Qxa2 and it is time to count the points difference. **24 Nxd7 Bxd7 25 Nf3** Now that White has exchanged Black's defensive knight he brings another piece in to replace the one that had been on e5. The big difference is that Black's defence has been weakened. **25...Qa8** It is probably best just to play 25...f6! to stop the knight invading the influential e5-square, although 26 h4 is promising. **26 Ne5 Bc6?!**

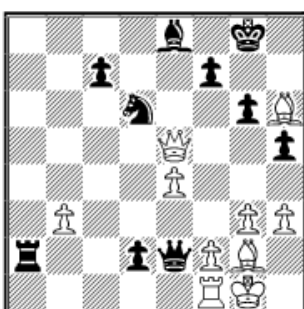


An ambitious response, but with so few pieces defending then surely 26...Be8! has some merit. **27 Qd1!** 27 d5 looks good, but Kramnik prefers to add the queen to the attack. Still, I wonder what he had seen because the sample lines look a good try: 27...exd5? (27...Bb7 28 Ng4 looks highly dangerous for Black) 28 exd5 Nxd5 29 Nxc6 Qxc6 when I think 30 Bb2! is very strong. **27...Na2 28 Bb2 b4 29 d5 Be8 30 Ng4 30 Qc2!** is a decent

alternative. **30...Nc3 31 Qf3 h5 32 Nf6+ Bxf6 33 Qxf6 exd5 34 Qd4 Ra2 35 Qxb4 Nb5?!** Or **35...Rxb2 36 Qxc3 Qa2 37 exd5 Bb5** (37...Bd7 is met by 38 Qf6) 38 Qf6!? is better for White. **36 Bf6 Qa7 37 Re3 d4** The alternatives 37...c5 38 exd5! and 37...Ra6 38 exd5 both win. **38 Qe7! Nd6 39 Rd3!** 39 Re1? is not so convincing upon 39...d3 40 Rf1 d2. **39...Qa6** The alternatives offer little hope: 39...Qa5 40 Bxd4 Qe1+ 41 Kh2 wins and after 39...Ra1+ 40 Kh2 Qa5 41 Bxd4 Black can give up. **40 Rd1?!** Atypically poor time-trouble move because he needed to complete forty moves for the time-control. Kramnik can win in style with 40 Bg5!!



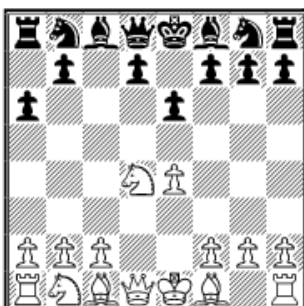
This takes advantage of the weak dark squares around the black king: 40... Qxd3 (40...Kh7 does not help because of 41 Qf8) 41 Bh6 Kh7 42 Qf8 with a forced checkmate to follow. **40...Qe2 41 Rf1 d3 42 Bd4! d2 43 Qe5 Kf8 44 Be3 Kg8** Or 44...f6 45 Qxf6+ Bf7 46 Bf3 Qd3 47 Qd8+ Kg7 48 Bh6+! is crushing. **45 Bh6**



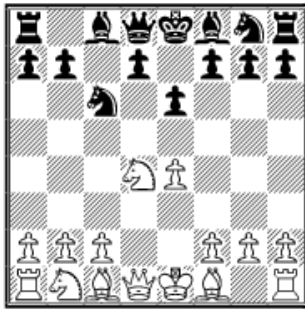
45...Qxf2+!? Piket comes up with such clever ideas until the end, but sadly for him it just doesn't work under careful scrutiny. While 45...Nf5 is a brave attempt at survival, it does not convince after 46 Qxe8+ Kh7 47 Qxf7+ Kxh6 48 exf5 gxf5 49 Qf6+ Kh7 50 Qxf5+ Kh8 51 Qf3 when the danger has gone and White is just winning. **46 Rxf2 46 Kxf2 d1Q+ 47 Kg1** also wins. **46...d1Q+ 47 Rf1!** 47 Kh2? is awful because 47...Qa1! allows Black to defend against the checkmate threats and White's advantage just about disappears. **47...Rxc2+ 48 Kxc2 Qe2+ 49 Kg1 1-0**

And finally, **Jürgen Weißbauer** from **Germany** sets a real challenge to my knowledge about openings. He writes, "I have a question about the naming of openings. In English chess literature I read about the Kan Opening as part of the Sicilian Defence. In German and Russian – I think in the whole of European chess literature – it is always called the Paulsen or Taimanov Defence. Is there a logical differentiation or is there only a dispute about honour. Who was Kan? I never heard or read about this chessplayer. Are there any published games from Kan?"

This is a tricky one because I am not an expert on chess history, but I will try to answer the question and if anyone has something wiser to say on the subject, then just e-mail. I believe the Kan occurs after the moves **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6**



While the Taimanov occurs upon **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6** (2...Nc6 and 4...e6 is another way to transpose) **3 d4 cxd4 Nxd4 Nc6**

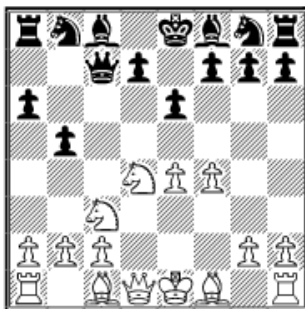


This is very similar to the Kan, but the big difference is that now 5 Bd3? (and yes I have seen it played instantly by keen juniors at weekend tournaments) just loses to 5...Nxd4. Of course, there are many transpositions to contend with in such similar openings. If you are still following my shortened history guide, then as I understand the line that runs 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nb5 Nf6 6 Nbc3 and now 6...Bb4 is officially known as the Paulsen in some sources, although most books in the past have described the four opening moves of the Kan as the Paulsen. Confused?

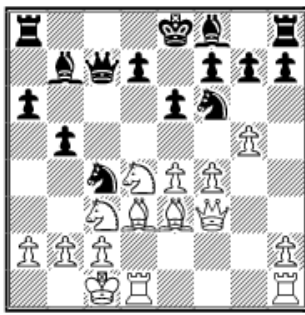
It might be easier to explain with a miniature that should inspire anyone playing Black and watch out for the games played by Kan himself in the notes.

Tibor Tolnai - Mats Sjoberg Zalakaros 1992

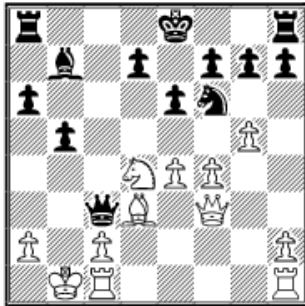
1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6 Black's opening is designed to wait and see where White commits his pieces before responding accordingly. That sounds good, but it also means that White has more options at his disposal with popular alternatives being 5 Bd3 or 5 c4. **5 Nc3** Mr. Weißauer was keen to see a game from Kan, so A.Nikitin-I.Kan, Riga 1952, should do the job: 5 Be2 Nf6 6 Nc3 Bb4 7 Bf3 Qc7 8 0-0 Nc6 9 Nce2 Ne5 10 Ng3 Nxf3+ 11 Qxf3 Be7 12 c3 0-0 13 Nh5 Nxe5 14 Qxe5 b5 15 Bd2 Bb7 16 Rae1 Qc4 with the initiative. **5...Qc7** In the lines with 5 Nc3 this seems to be a natural square for the queen and it has been tried and trusted numerous times. **6 f4** Or 6 Be2 Nf6 7 0-0 Nc6 8 Be3 b5 9 a3 Bb7 10 Kh1 Be7 11 f4 d6 12 Bf3 0-0 13 Qe1 Nd7 14 Qg3 Bf6 15 Nde2 Nb6 led to equal chances in B.Spasky-I.Kan, Moscow 1955. I quite like 6 g3 if White is looking to play something a little bit different. **6...b5!?**



Black wants to apply pressure to the e4-pawn by threatening to move the defender of the pawn with a timely ...b5-b4. **7 Qf3** Or 7 Bd3 Bb7 8 Qe2 (8 Bd2 Nc6 9 Nxc6 Bxc6 10 Qe2 is also possible, which promises White a slight edge; while 8 Qf3 will transpose to the main game) and now a) 8...b4 9 Nd1 Nf6 10 Nf2 Nc6 11 Nxc6 Qxc6 12 Be3 Be7 13 0-0 0-0 led to good pressure against the e4-pawn in .Rios Parra-K.Spraggett, Salou 2005. b) 8...Nf6 9 Bd2 b4 10 Nd1 d5 11 e5 Ne4 12 Be3 Nd7 13 0-0 g6 14 c3 Ndc5 (if Black grabs the pawn after 14...bxc3 15 bxc3 Nxc3 16 Nxc3 Qxc3, then White has more than enough compensation upon 17 Rfc1 Qa5 18 Rab1, especially because 18...Rb8? allows the trick 19 Rxb7 Rxb7 20 Rc8+ Ke7 21 Nc6 checkmate) 15 Bc2 with level chances although White eventually won in M. Vachier Lagrave-A.Kveinys, Crete 2007. **7...Bb7 8 Bd3 Nf6 9 Be3** The latest game in this line was played by a talented American, because E.Tate did well to defeat C.Kirkebo at Maastricht 2009 with a clever combination. That game went 9 g4 b4 10 Nce2 d5 11 e5 Ne4 12 Ng3 Nc6 13 Be3 Bc5 14 Nxc6 Qxc6 15 0-0 0-0? (15...Nxc3 16 Qxc3 d4 looks good for Black) 16 Bxc5 Nxc5 17 Kb1 f6? (there is no need to volunteer to weaken the kingside pawns. Therefore, Black should consider 17...Rac8 to help the attack) 18 exf6 Rxf6 19 g5 (White now conducts the rest of the game in style by storming the kingside) 19...Rff8 20 Bxh7+! Kxh7 21 Qh5+ Kg8 22 g6 Rfe8 23 Rhe1 1-0. **9...Nc6 10 0-0-0** 10 g4 and 10 Nb3 can also be considered. **10...Na5** A year before this game White had to deal with another way of conducting the opening with 10...b4 when the game continued 11 Nce2 Na5 12 g4 d5 13 e5 Nd7 14 Kb1 (instead 14 b3 g5!? invites wild complications upon 15 fxg5 Bg7 16 g6 hxg6 17 Bxg6 fxg6 (17...Nxe5? fails in spectacular fashion to 18 Nxe6! winning) 18 Nxe6 Qxe5 19 Nxg7+ Qxg7 20 Bd4 Qh6+ 21 Kb1 Rf8 and Black has the superior chances) 14...Nc4 15 Bc1 0-0-0 16 h4 (16 b3 Na3+ 17 Ka1 g5 18 Qg3 is equal) 16...Nc5 when chances were even in T.Tolnai-J.Polgar, Budapest 1991. **11 g4** Or 11 Kb1 Bb4 (11...Nc4 looks promising in view of 12 Bc1!? Bb4 13 Nce2 0-0 with promising play, so White should choose 12 Bf2) 12 Nce2 is roughly equal. **11...Nc4 12 g5?**



A natural but losing move! I can understand how White can go wrong, because one often only looks at where the attacked piece can retreat. This means an oversight is possible when you have a sudden lack of sense of danger. **12...Nxb2! 13 Kxb2 Ba3+** This is the clever part of the combination and obviously something that White completely missed. **14 Kb1** Or **14 Kxa3 Qxc3+** **15 Nb3 b4+** **16 Ka4 a5** and the time is right for White to resign. **14...Qxc3 15 Bc1 Bxc1 16 Rxc1**



16...Nxe4 0-1

Ilya Abramovich Kan (1909-78) was an international master who worked as a lawyer in Russia. He came third in the 1929 USSR Championship and had various chess successes, such as second to Fine in Moscow 1937. In the 1950s he was involved in chess organisation where his international arbiter's badge proved useful.

Of course, if a proper chess historian has more detail then let me know.

Opening Lanes is based on readers' questions. Do you have a question about a particular opening line? Baffled by a branch of the Benoni or Budapest? Submit your questions (with your full name and country of residence please) and perhaps Gary will reply in his next ChessCafe.com column...

[Yes, I have a question for Gary!](#)

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