



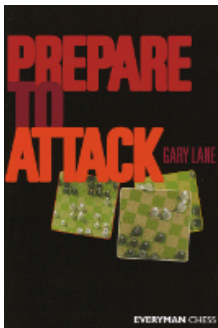
COLUMNISTS

Opening
Lanes

Gary Lane



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A Game of Shadows

How to avoid the main lines of the Sicilian?

This is basically the question posed by **Arnold Warren** from the **USA** who e-mailed to say, "I am a long time follower of ChessCafe.com, and although my rating is not that great, I have decided to do something about it by concentrating on one opening for white: 1 e4. But it seems like ninety percent of the time my opponent will respond with 1...c5. I don't want to spend all of what little time I have studying all of the possibilities in the Sicilian Defence and I want to play something that will immediately change Black's game plans; i.e., get him 'out of book' so to speak. So I ask you most sincerely, what is the best anti-Sicilian scheme at the club level?"

There are many lines against the Sicilian and I have to admit to having tried quite a few. It is always difficult to give advice on which anti-Sicilian variation to recommend to readers. This is because if I was coaching someone, I would know all about their previous games and have a good idea of their style. In a case like this, it is a bit like being Sherlock Holmes having to piece together certain bits of information and trying to come to a definite conclusion. The best idea in the circumstances is to suggest a couple of openings with one being suitable for aggressive players and the other one for those who want a more positional approach. I can look at a few more openings in detail once the reader or anyone else reports back which opening they prefer.

I would suggest that if the reader wants to attack the Grand Prix Attack is a good place to start. Then again, the c3-Sicilian is a good way to keep the draw in hand with potential for more, which appeals to the more solid player. I can understand Mr. Warren's frustration because when you have other commitments in life, such as work or college, there is less time to study and it is extremely difficult to keep up with the latest twists in a sharp opening such as the Najdorf. How we choose our openings is always haphazard. I meet loads of people who play the Dragon, because as a junior they merely liked the name. Gawain Jones is an English grandmaster rated over 2600, but he started playing the Grand Prix after being guided towards the opening by his then coach Angus Dunnington. I remember seeing Gawain being taught at the age of eight by Angus and later I also helped him when coaching the English juniors at the World Junior tournaments where the theme was always how to attack.

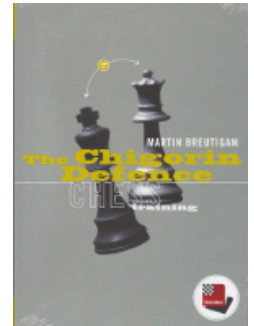
By the way if you still want Angus to advise on the opening, you will be disappointed because he now lives in a remote area of Scotland where he apparently follows the chess news, but does not play. Instead he plays poker online, writes an official blog about the card game and will be appearing at a few festivals as 32Red's Poker Ambassador. If you see him, do the right thing and immediately ask him questions about the merits of the Grand Prix Attack!

Anyway, here is one of Gawain's stylish victories:

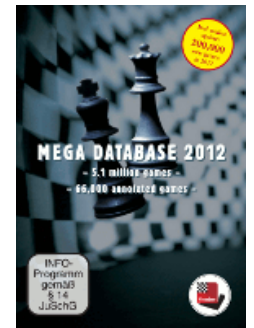
Gawain Jones – Artur Zarkaj
European Cup, Kallithea 2008
Closed Sicilian [B23]

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 d6 This is the standard move by Najdorf or Dragon players. This is because they fear if, say, they try 2...e6, then White could outwit them by playing 3 Nf3, intending 4 d4, and force them away from their favourite opening choice. The difference to lines where the d-pawn is kept on d7 during the opening moves is that now it will take Black two moves to play the black d-pawn to d5 and that extra move allows White to place a bishop on c4

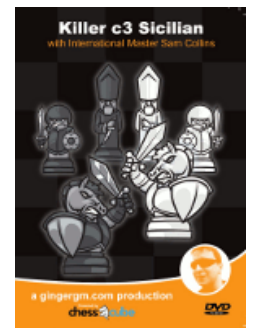
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without fearing it will be quickly blocked by ...e6 and d7-d5. 2...e6 is of course a popular reply and I would recommend the line 3 f4 Nc6 4 Nf3 d5 5 Bb5 Nge7 6 exd5 exd5 7 Qe2, but maybe that can be discussed in more detail if the reader is keen to make progress in this opening. **3 f4**



[FEN "rnbqkbnr/pp2pppp/3p4/2p5/4PP2/2N5/PPPP2PP/R1BQKBNR b KQkq - 0 3"]

This is the move that signifies the Grand Prix Attack. **3...g6 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bc4**
 The bishop's aggressive square aiming at f7 is all part of the attacking style that persuades players to give this opening a go. **5...Nc6 6 0-0 e6 7 d3 Nge7 8 Qe1 0-0 9 f5!?**



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/pp2npbp/2npp1p1/2p2P2/2B1P3/2NP1N2/PPP3PP/R1B1QRK1 b - - 0 9"]

Yes, more evidence that this opening is ideally suited to aggressive players because a pawn is offered as a way of weakening the black kingside pawn barrier. If Black responds by shuffling his pieces, then White will play Qh4, Bh6, and Ng5 with a terrific attack, which often happens at club level. **9...d5** Black is right to be wary of taking the f-pawn at the first opportunity and instead tries to limit the importance of white's light-squared bishop. The idea of grabbing the pawn and hanging on to it can lead to disaster: a) 9...gxf5 10 Qh4 Ng6 (10...fxe4 11 dxe4 is also possible) 11 Qh5 Nd4 12 Bg5 Bf6 13 Bh6 Bg7 14 Ng5! Qf6 15 Nxh7 1-0, J.Van Overdam-A.Thana Balasingam, Vlissingen 2010. b) 9...exf5 10 Qh4 and now b1) 10...Na5 11 Bg5 Re8 12 Nd5 Nac6 13 Nf6+ Bxf6 14 Bxf6 h5 (14...f4 15 Ng5 1-0, R.Franca-D. Wilhelms, Volta Redonda 2001) 15 Qg5 Kh7 (15...fxe4 16 Qh6 1-0, R. Dobrovolskiy-A.Piskunov, Krasnoyarsk 2008.) 16 Bxf7 Rf8 (or 16...Rg8 17 Bxg8+ Kxg8 18 exf5 Qf8 19 Rae1 Kf7 20 Bxe7 Nxe7 21 fxc6+ 1-0, S. Milliet-M.Doncheva, Varna 2002) 17 Bxg6+ Nxc6 18 Qxh5+ Kg8 19 Qxg6# 1-0, S.Gvetadze-N.Kharmunova, Moscow 2008. b2) 10...Ne5 11 Bg5 (perhaps not surprisingly, many players resign at this point, once they have calculated they are about to lose material) 11...Re8 (the knight needs to be protected and, of course, the obvious ...f7-f6 is prohibited because of the pin by the bishop on c4; it is this detail that is often overlooked) 12 Nxe5 Bxe5 13 Nd5 Nxd5 (13...Kf8 looks awful, when 14 Qxh7 will help to wrap up the game in White's favour) 14 Bxd8 Ne3 15 Rf3 Nxc4 16 dxc4 Bxb2 17 Re1 Bd4 + 18 Kh1 Bd7 19 Bf6 fxe4 20 Qh6 1-0, A.Kopinits-E.Hasanova, Oropesa del Mar 1999. **10 Bb3 dxe4 11 dxe4 gxf5** 11...exf5 is also answered by 12 Qh4 with great practical problems for Black who must defend against a dangerous attack. **12 Qh4** As is usual in this line, White's queen is poised to aid a direct attack on the black king. **12...Nd4** Or 12...fxe4 when 13 Ng5! is tricky. **13 Bg5 Nxf3+ 14 Rxf3** Black would argue that he has managed to exchange the potentially dangerous white knight, but I reckon introducing the king's rook is

not an improvement. **14...Qd4+ 15 Kh1 Ng6 16 Qh5 fxe4 17 Rh3** White is having all the fun, but Black has calculated that his king can escape without too much damage. **17...f5 18 Qxh7+ Kf7**



[FEN "r1b2r2/pp3kbQ/4p1n1/2p2pB1/3qp3/1BN4R/PPP3PP/R6K w - - 0 19"]

19 Rh6! This is the move that Zarkaj missed; the black king comes under closer scrutiny thanks to the pin on the bishop, allowing the white rook to infiltrate and destroy. **19...Ne7 20 Rf6+ Qxf6 21 Bxf6 Kxf6** A quick count of the pieces might make you think Black is OK, because he has a rook, bishop, and pawn for the queen, but the perilous state of his king is the deciding factor. **22 Rf1**



[FEN "r1b2r2/pp2n1bQ/4pk2/2p2p2/4p3/1BN5/PPP3PP/5R1K b - - 0 22"]

A simple but effective idea to pin the f-pawn and prepare Nxe4+. **22...Rh8** There is no hope in this position; for instance, **22...e3** is soon routed upon **23 Ne4+ Kf7 24 Nd6+ Kf6 25 Qh4+ Ke5 26 Qxe7** and it is time to put your coat on. **23 Nxe4+ Kf7 24 Rxf5+ Bravo! 24...Nxf5 25 Qxf5+ 1-0**

If you are looking for something that is less adventurous, then the c3-Sicilian is the perfect choice:

Dejan Bojkov – Fedja Zulfi

Canberra 2011

Sicilian Defence [B22]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 The c3-Sicilian is also known as the Alapin Variation and is a reliable opening. The idea is very straightforward; White just wants to create a pawn centre with d2-d4. To a certain degree it appeals to those who like to keep things more controlled and are happy with a more positional approach. **2...d5** Black challenges the proposed white pawn centre. **3 exd5 Qxd5**



[FEN "rnb1kbnr/pp2pppp/8/2pq4/8/2P5/PP1P1PPP/RNBQKBNR w KQkq - 0 4"]

It is often frowned upon to have a queen in the centre of the board so early, but here the difference is that Nc3 is not yet available, because the pawn is on that square of course. **4 Nf3 Nc6 5 d4 Bg4 6 Be2** White simply breaks the pin and there is no danger of losing the d-pawn, even though Black can exchange the defending knight. 6 dxc5 is also possible. **6...cxd4** A popular alternative is 6...e6 7 h3 and now a) 7...Bh5 8 c4 Qd6 9 d5! Bxf3 10 Bxf3 Nd4 11 Nc3 0-0-0 12 0-0 Nf6 13 b4 Nxf3+ 14 Qxf3 cxb4 15 Nb5 with the advantage, L. Henris-S.Marte, Charleroi 2011. b) 7...Bf5 8 0-0 Nf6 9 Be3 cxd4 10 Nxd4 Nxd4 11 cxd4 Qd8?! (perhaps 11...Qa5 is better) 12 Nc3 Be7 13 Bb5+ Nd7 14 d5 with a strong initiative, A.Kislinsky-T.Sklars, Senica SVK 2011. **7 cxd4 e6** The game S.Williams-R.Griffiths, British Championship 2011 saw 7...Nf6 and Black tried to carry on with an unusual plan of delaying ...e6, but it did not quite work out as expected: 8 Nc3 Qa5 9 h3 Bh5 (or 9...Bxf3 10 Bxf3 Rd8 11 Be3 with a slight edge) 10 b4!? (an enterprising gambit that tries to make the most of Black's slow development on the kingside; it is worth remembering that 10 0-0 e6 is likely to transpose to the main game Bojkov-Zulfic) 10...Qxb4 11 Bd2 Qd6 12 Rb1 Qd7 13 d5! Nxd5 14 Nxd5 Qxd5 15 Rxb7 e5 (instead 15...e6 runs into 16 Rb5!) 16 Qa4 Rc8 17 Rb5 Qd8 18 Rxe5 + 1-0, S.Williams-R.Griffiths, Sheffield 2011. By the way it is worth pointing out that 7...Bxf3?! is an indication that Black is being greedy by targeting the d4-pawn, but the plan is flawed: 8 Bxf3 Qxd4? 9 Bxc6+ bxc6 10 Qxd4 and Black will resign. **8 Nc3 Qa5 9 0-0 Nf6 10 Be3** White just carries on developing and adds some support to the d-pawn. **10...Be7 11 a3** A typical idea to prepare b2-b4 and make Black work hard to maintain equality. After all, not many people play the Sicilian to indulge in quiet positional manoeuvring. **11...0-0 12 b4 Qd8 13 h3 Bh5 14 Qd2**



[FEN "r2q1rk1/pp2bppp/2n1pn2/7b/1P1P4/P1N1BN1P/3QBPP1/R4RK1 b - - 0 14"]

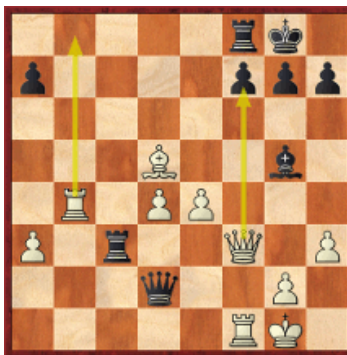
The position is equal, but White would argue that it is easier to play, because he can smoothly get his rooks into play and then seek to make progress. **14...Rc8 15 Rfd1?! I** presume that White did not think it mattered which rook moves first, but it does thanks to a nice tactic. Therefore, 15 Rac1 is the safe and steady reply, intending Rfd1. **15...Nxb4!** A nice trick; it is unfortunate for the young Australian that White can wriggle out of the situation without losing material. **16 Rdb1** Or 16 axb4 Bxb4 17 Rdc1 Ne4 and Black is on top. **16...Nc6 17 Rxb7 Na5 18 Rbb1** Of course, 18 Rxa7? allows the knight fork 18...Nb3 winning material. **18...Bxf3 19 Bxf3 Nc4 20 Qc1 Qa5 21 Rb3** White adds some protection to the knight with equal opportunities. **21...Nd5 22 Nxd5 exd5 23 Qe1 Qa4?!** Black should really exchange queens, because now the weakness of the pawn on d5 can be shown. **24 Rb7! Bf6** Maybe

Black can put up greater resistance with 24...Nxe3; for instance, 25 fxe3 Bg5 26 Bxd5 Rcd8 27 Rb4! Qa6 28 e4, when admittedly White is still better. 25 Bxd5 Nxe3 26 fxe3 Rce8



[FEN "4rrk1/pR3ppp/5b2/3B4/q2P4/P3P2P/6P1/R3Q1K1 w - - 0 27"]

27 Rb4 This is a clever move that cancels out all the tactics Black was hoping for based on ...Bxd4, so White is just a pawn up. **27...Qc2 28 e4 Bg5 29 Qg3 Qd2 30 Qf3 Rc8** Black makes it obvious that he intends the rook to occupy a square on the c-file (on c2 or c3), so White sets him up beautifully. **31 Rf1 Rc3?**



[FEN "5rk1/p4ppp/8/3B2b1/1R1PP3/P1r2Q1P/3q2P1/5RK1 w - - 0 32"]

32 Qxf7+! 1-0

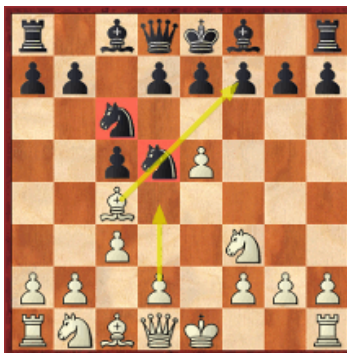
This might inspire Mr. Warren and other readers so now we can turn our attention to the alternative move 2...Nf6:

Michele Godena – Clement Sreeves

Otranto 2011

Sicilian Defence [B22]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 Nf6 3 e5 Nd5 4 Nf3 Nc6 5 Bc4



[FEN "r1bqkb1r/pp1ppppp/2n5/2pnP3/2B5/2P2N2/PP1P1PPP/RNBQK2R b KQkq - 0 5"]

The modern main line is recognised by playing the bishop out at this point. In the past focus was put on 5 d4 cxd4 6 Bc4, but Tiviakov's liking for the text has accelerated its reputation. **5...Nb6 6 Bb3 d5** Instead, 6...d6 just

transposes upon 7 exd6, while 6...c4 7 Bc2 d6 8 exd6 Qxd6 9 0-0 is another line that White needs to know. **7 exd6 Qxd6 8 Na3** After 8 0-0 Be6 9 d4 cxd4 10 Na3, the critical move is 10...dxc3!, which leads to complications after 11 Nb5. **8...Be6**



[FEN "r3kb1r/pp2pppp/1nnqb3/2p5/8/NBP2N2/PP1P1PPP/R1BQK2R w KQkq - 0 9"]

The bishop is often deployed in this line on e6 to diminish the influence of white's light-squared bishop. Also possible is a) 8...Bg4? 9 Bxf7+! Kxf7 10 Ng5+ Ke8 11 Qxg4 with advantage. b) 8...a6 9 0-0 e6 (or 9...Bf5 10 d4 cxd4 11 Nxd4 Nxd4 12 cxd4 e6 13 Qf3 leads to roughly equal chances) 10 Qe2 (the idea is to play Rd1 and d4) 10...Be7 11 Rd1 Bf6 12 d4 cxd4 13 Be3 (a nice way to take back on d4 with confidence) 13...0-0 14 Nxd4 Nxd4 15 Bxd4 Bxd4 16 Rxd4 Qc7 17 Rad1 (White's active pieces give him the edge) 17...Bd7 18 Nc4 Bb5 (not 18...Nxc4? in view of 19 Rxd7 Qc5 20 Bxc4 and White will win) 19 Qe5 Qxe5 20 Nxe5 Rfc8 21 Rf4 Rc5 22 Nxf7 led to a clear advantage in H. Asis Gargatagli-S.Bystrov, Barbera del Valles 2011. **9 d4** Less precise is 9 0-0 Bxb3 10 Qxb3 Qd3! 11 Re1 with equal opportunities. Or 9 Nb5 Qd7 and now a) 10 d4 Bxb3 11 axb3 (or 11 Qxb3? Na5! 12 Ne5 Nxb3 13 Nxd7 Kxd7 14 axb3 a6 15 Na3 cxd4 and Black's extra pawn in the ending gives him all the winning chances) 11...a6! 12 Na3 cxd4 13 cxd4 e6 with an edge. b) 10...Qxe6+ 11 Qe2 Qxe2+ 12 Kxe2 Rc8 13 d3 with an equal ending. **9...Bxb3** After 9...cxd4, there is 10 Nb5 Qd7 11 Bxe6 (11 Nbx d4 gives White a tiny edge) 11...Qxe6+ and now 12 Be3!, the key move because the threat of Nc7+ is deadly and consequently White has the superior chances. **10 Qxb3 cxd4 11 Nb5 Qd8?!** This natural reply gives away the initiative. Instead, 11...Qd7 12 Nbx d4 Nxd4 13 Nxd4 White is slightly better according to Tiviakov. b) 11...Qb8 12 g3! (a quirky looking move, but the threat of Bf4 has to be taken seriously) 12...e5 13 Ng5 Nd8 14 cxd4 Be7 (14...exd4? allowing 15 Bf4 winning) 15 0-0 0-0 16 Nf3 a6 17 Nc3 exd4 18 Nxd4 Bc5 19 Be3 with the superior chances, M.Godena-A.Rombaldoni, Arvier 2007. **12 Bf4 Rc8** The automatic 12...Nd5 is rudely demolished by 13 Qxd5! Qxd5 14 Nc7+ Kd7 15 Nxd5 and White is a piece ahead. **13 0-0-0** Godena is keen to add his queen's rook into the action. **13...d3 14 Rhe1**



[FEN "2rqkb1r/pp2pppp/1nn5/1N6/5B2/1QPp1N2/PP3PPP/2KRR3 b k - 0 14"]

The immediate threat is Nd6+ to take advantage of the pin on the e-file. White's forces are well placed to create various tactical threats, but Black problems are clearly connected to the king being left in the centre. **14...Na5** The obvious 14...e6 is not safe because the knock-out move 15 Rxe6+! destroys Black's position: 15...fxe6 16 Qxe6+ Be7 17 Nd6+ Qxd6 18 Bxd6 with a big advantage. **15 Qb4 Nac4** Or 15...Nc6 16 Nd6+ Kd7 17 Ne5+

Nxe5 18 Qb5+ Rc6 19 Nxb7 is crushing. **16 Nxa7 Ra8 17 Qb5+ Qd7 18 Rxd3! 1-0**

N. Earl Roberts from **New Zealand** came up with an interesting and well informed question via e-mail. He writes, "Having read your latest column, as one does every month, I have questions. To begin with, specifically your quote in relation to **1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 cxd5!**? that 'other lines, such as **3 Nf3** and **3 Nc3**, are more of a test for Black'. Testing? Here is the rub, after **1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 3 Nc3 dxc4** (As recommended by Morozevich in his book written with Vladimir Barsky) **4 Nf3 Nf6 5 d5!** wins a piece after **5...Na5 6 Qa4+ c6 7.b4**, etc. So the question is why is this avoided like the plague by White? Why wouldn't you force the win of the piece and shouldn't it be up to Black to prove its worth?

"These question are made even more pertinent because when you come across someone who is supposedly authoritative on the Chigorin Defence that this crucial line is like some sort of crazed uncle you don't talk about at family gatherings. Morozevich indicates in his book that the d5 push is less dangerous with the inclusion of Nf3 and Nf6, but only spends little under a page and a half scantily covering 5.d5! while spending another forty-seven pages covering every other fifth move. And Angus Dunnington is no better; in his 1996 Batsford book, he devotes less than a half column with out any real analysis rationalising that somehow the position must be favourable to Black.

"I don't know about this though. In this day and age, when every thing is at your fingertips, evidence can certainly be found to cast a degree of cynicism on such a conclusion. In the English language files of his Chessbase [Chigorin Defence CD](#), Martin Breutigam gives fourteen games with this line of which only one is analysed in passing with a total score of +8 -3 =3 for White. Even Chessbase's own on-line database provides a score of +20 -5 -12 for White after **7 b4 b5 8 Qxa5 Qxa5**. Maybe these numbers don't prove much in themselves, but they are a start when trying to clear away the utter obfuscation that seems apparent."

If you think a reader has stumbled upon a line that wins a piece in the Chigorin, then the short answer is yes. The longer answer is yes, but Black has decent compensation, which seems to frighten off the elite players with the white pieces. Mr. Roberts has a long list of books and CDs that don't have the line, but I suggest he expand his library to add the book *Ideas Behind the Modern Chess Openings: Black* by Gary Lane. Yes, the alert readers will see that I have mentioned one my works again, but with good cause. I also wondered why this line had been neglected, so when I wrote a book advocating the Chigorin as part of a repertoire book, I took a good look at the line and concluded that Black has sufficient compensation for the piece. It is true that it has great statistics, but I find a search of databases can be confusing. In this case the white victories can be traced to the fact that in the vast majority of games White had the higher rating.

Here is a game to illustrate the key line:

Danilo Milanovic – Zoran Tasic

Belgrade 2011

Chigorin Defence [D07]

1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6 A sign that the opening is the Chigorin. **3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Nf3 dxc4 5 d5 Na5 6 Qa4+ c6 7 b4**



[FEN "r1bqkb1r/pp2pppp/2p2n2/n2P4/QPp5/2N2N2/P3PPPP/R1B1KB1R b KQkq b3 0 7"]

This is the line that interests Mr. Roberts; indeed the piece is trapped although the accepted wisdom is that Black is compensated. **7...b5** Instead, **7...cxb3?!** is not right because **8 axb3 e6 9 Bd2!** and Black is in trouble; though **9 Qxa5? Qxa5 10 Rxa5 Bb4** changes the situation. **9...b6 10 dxc6** is very strong. **8 Qxa5 Qxa5 9 bxa5 b4 10 Nd1!?** White is prepared to defend the ending in the knowledge that if Black crumbles the only important tally will be that the two pawns won't be enough for a knight in the long-term. The statistics do favour White, but equally in the vast majority of games Black is the lower rated player. Therefore, it is not always the opening that is the real problem. In previous times much emphasis has been placed on the line **10 dxc6 bxc3**; for example, **11 e3 Ba6 12 Ne5 Nd5 13 a3 g6 14 Nxc4 Nc7 15 a4 Bg7 16 Ba3 Bf6 17 0-0-0 0-0 18 Rd7** with a big advantage, I. Kovalenko-M.Stefansky, Dnipropetrovsk 2008. **10...cxd5** Black has two pawns for the piece and high hopes to make it three by sweeping up the a5-pawn at some point. White has the piece, but it is not easy to develop his pieces to their optimum squares. **11 Rb1** White takes the natural decision to attack the b4-pawn and have the rook in a position where it can help to stop the pawn avalanche. I reckon that **11 g3** is a stern test if only to try to get the kingside organised by developing his pieces. For example, **11...e6 12 Bg2** and now a) **12...Ba6 13 0-0 Bd6 14 Bf4 Ke7 15 Nd4 Rhc8** led to equal chances in N.Dzagnidze -O.Romanishin, Athens 2007. b) **12...Be7 13 0-0 0-0 14 a3 b3 15 Bb2 Bd8?! (15...Bb7** looks better for Black) **16 Ne5 Ba6 17 Nc6 Bc7 18 Rc1 Bb5?! 19 Nd4 Bd7 20 Nxb3!** turned the game in White's favour, D.Buckley-J.Mueller, British Team Championship (4NCL) 2010. **11...e6** The computer evaluates chances as even, but not many of us play like one at the board. Still, Black can create plenty of problems and I am not sure who would be most comfortable in this position if the players had similar ratings. **12 Nd4 e5 12...Bd7** looks sensible. **13 Nc6 Bf5 14 Rb2 c3 15 Rb3 Bc2**



[FEN "r3kb1r/p4ppp/2N2n2/P2pp3/1p6/1Rp5/P1b1PPPP/2BNKB1R w Kkq - 0 16"]

Naturally, Black is happy to trap the rook to gain back some material. Instead, the startling **15...Bd6!?** is for those with a lot of skill, because after **16 Nxb4 d4** Black only has a pawn for the piece, but after looking at this position for sometime it is surprisingly rich in possibilities. **16 Nxe5 Bxb3 17 axb3 Bd6**



[FEN "r3k2r/p4ppp/3b1n2/P2pN3/1p6/1Pp5/4PPPP/2BNKB1R w Kkq - 0 18"]

It is clear that the opening has not proved to be a difference in the game, because already chances are even, but 500 extra rating points says that White is favourite to win. **18 Nd3 Rb8 19 Ne3 Rb5 20 Nf5 Bf8** Perhaps **20...Kd7** is also OK, in view of **21 Nxg7 Rxa5** and the game continues, but White is the one who needs to play very accurately to hold the position. **21 a6** Milanovic is making it as difficult as possible for Black to win the a-pawn in an effort to increase the pressure on justifying the piece sacrifice. **21...Ra5 22 e3 Nd7** If **22...Rxa6**, then **23 Nxb4** is possible, because the knight reveals a discovered attack upon the black rook. Maybe the line **22...g6 23 Nd4 Bd6** is a decent alternative for another day. **23 Nd4 Ra1?!** A direct approach; although it does not quite work out because White can adequately defend and, more to the point, can slowly but surely catch up on getting his pieces into play. It might seem basic, but **23...Nb8** to chase the a-pawn is worth contemplating. **24 Kd1 Bc5 25 Nc6 0-0 26 Kc2** The key move that suddenly plunges Black into despair, because now he is well placed to take on b4 without any counterattack. The line **26 Nxb4 Bxb4 27 Nxb4 Nc5 28 Kc2 Rb8** is fine for Black. **26...Kh8 27 Nxb4 Bxb4 28 Nxb4** White is now clearly on top. He has two bishops for the rook and the initiative. **28...Nc5 29 Nd3?! 29 Be2!** just looks good. **29...Nxa6?! Or 29...Nxd3 30 Bxd3 Ra2+** Black manages to conjure up some active play. For example, **31 Kxc3 Rc8+**, but White is still OK even if he has to shed the bishop on c1: **32 Kb4 (32 Kd4 Ra1 33 e4 Raxc1 34 Rxc1 Rxc1 35 exd5 Rc8 36 d6 Kg8 37 Kd5 Kf8 38 d7 Rd8 39 Kd6 winning) 32...Ra1 33 e4 Rxc1 34 Rxc1 Rxc1 35 exd5 Rc8 36 d6 Kg8 37 d7 Rd8 38 Bb5 Kf8 39 Kc5 Ke7** and Black is still defending. **30 Kxc3 Ra2** Tasic valiantly keeps going; hoping for a minor miracle, but White should be too strong to let his advantage slip away. **31 b4 Rc8+ 32 Kb3 Rac2 33 Bb2 Rd2 34 Bc3 Rd1 35 Kc2 Ra1 36 Kb2 Rd1 37 g3 h6 38 Kc2 Ra1 39 Bg2?**



[FEN "2r4k/p4pp1/n6p/3p4/1P6/2BNP1P1/2K2PBP/r6R b - - 0 39"]

39 Kb3, intending **Bg2**, is very good. **39...Rxb1?** **39...Ra3!** wins a piece back, so this was *zeitnot* or the moves were entered incorrectly in the database. **40 Bxb1 Nc7 41 Kb3 f6 42 Nf4 Rb8** It is just a matter of time before White's advantage makes a big difference. **43 Ka4 Rb5 44 Ne6 Rb7 45 Nxc7 Rxc7 46 Bd4 Rc2 47 Bxd5 1-0**

Has any reader tried this line for either colour?

Finally, **Paul Lowry** from the USA e-mails to ask, "Is the Jerome Gambit playable? **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 Bxf7+.**"

This is one of those openings that are great on the Internet (especially in one-minute games), but in normal time controls are too risky. Still, I have a soft spot for it, because the history of the opening is interesting and comes from a time long before the Internet came around. It was named after the American player Alomzo Wheeler Jerome (1834-1902) of Paxton, Illinois, and was analysed in the *American Chess Journal* in 1874. Of course, in that era wild attacking lines were applauded, but defence was disliked.

Here is the perfect game from the Jerome Gambit:

P. Banks – Karmmark

Internet 2007

Hungarian Defence [C50]

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 Bxf7+?



[FEN "r1bqk1nr/pppp1Bpp/2n5/2b1p3/4P3/5N2/PPPP1PPP/RNBQK2R b KQkq - 0 4"]

This is the Jerome Gambit and the bishop sacrifice is bound to be something of a surprise for Black. **4...Kxf7 5 Nxe5+?** This is the stage of the game where an opponent might kindly ask how long you have been playing the game and would you like a slice of cake after you lose? **5...Nxe5 6 Qh5+ Ke6 7 f4 Nc6 8 Qxc5 Qe7??**

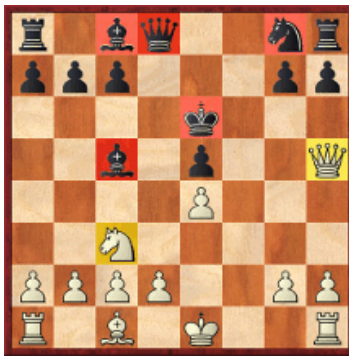


[FEN "r1b3nr/ppppq1pp/2n1k3/2Q5/4PP2/8/PPPP2PP/RNB1K2R w KQ - 0 9"]

It seems miracles really do happen. **9 Qd5+ Kf6 10 Qf5# 1-0**

Now to be fair to the Englishman Mr. Banks, he has actually had the courage to play it in club matches and has been successful. Another reader who is keen on the idea is Rick Kennedy from the USA and I hope he sends in more games or history to entertain us all. In the meantime I feel obliged to give an example of why this opening is not the best choice for White:

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 Bxf7+ Kxf7 5 Nxe5+ Nxe5 6 Qh5+ Ke6 7 f4 d6 An obvious improvement not to resist losing back one of the pieces and establishing a pawn on e5 to help shield the black king. **8 fxe5 dxe5 9 Nc3**



[FEN "r1bq2nr/ppp3pp/4k3/2b1p2Q/4P3/2N5/PPPP2PP/R1B1K2R b KQ - 0 9"]

An experienced player would notice that he is totally lost and do the right thing – offer a draw. **9...Nf6 10 Qg5 Kd6 11 Rf1** The pawn grab with **11 Qxg7?** is just a poor choice, which is revealed upon **11...Rg8 12 Qh6 Bf2+! 13 Kxf2 Rg6 14 Qh4 Ng4+ 15 Kg3 Nxf2+** leads directly to checkmate. **11... Qe7 12 d3 h6 13 Qg3 Kc6** and Black is busy counting the pieces in the knowledge that he is much better.

I am looking for more games in the Jermome Gambit, so send them in.

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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