

# The Gambit Cartel

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## Danish Pastry

The publication of Müller and Voigt's *Danish Dynamite* gives me an excuse to take a walk down memory lane. For many years I played the Danish/Göring complex exclusively with White in tournaments, and along the way I have accumulated many interesting examples of these openings as well as a few theoretical novelties that I will not -- alas! -- be sharing with you just now, since I may need them in the near future. But that's okay: I will show you some of Müller and Voigt's novelties, and that should more than make up for your missing out on mine.

There is every good reason to add this family of openings to your repertoire. Few lines offer so much creative scope, and it is truly remarkable the ways White finds to keep up the pressure, to maintain or increase the initiative. I've found that explaining the Göring to chess students is an excellent way of teaching them the finer points of piece play.

And as a fringe benefit, I'll offer the following strictly anecdotal comment: in two decades of tournament play at the club level (1500-2200), two decades in which I employed the Danish and Göring exclusively with White, I encountered a theoretically prepared opponent precisely *zero* times and never once failed to obtain a clear (sometimes winning) advantage out of the opening. I am not suggesting that White need not know the main lines, just that out there in the real world the importance of main lines is somewhat overrated. (See the final game, below, for proof.)

Without further ado, let's look at a game that takes us into one of the hottest theoretical lines:

**Mastrovasilis,D (2384) - Ovod,E (2303)**  
**Young Masters Groningen NED (2), 20.12.1999**

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.c3 dxc3 5.Bc4 d6 6.Nxc3 Nf6 7.Qb3 Qd7 8.Ng5 Ne5 9.Bb5**

Göring buff that I am, I had never heard of 9.Be2!?! in this position before reading *Danish Dynamite*.

**9...c6 10.f4 Ng6**

Black has a bewildering array of choices here. Other theoretically important moves include 10...Neg4, 10...h6, and 10...cxb5. For this last, see the next game.

**11.e5**

This is White's best and most active continuation, opening lines even at the cost of some material. It looks more natural to play 11.Bc4 but here

Müller and Voigt give 11...d5! 12.Nxd5 Nxd5 (12...cxd5?? 13.Bb5) 13.exd5 Bc5 14.dxc6 Qe7+ 15.Kf1 0-0 when, as they say, Black has very dangerous compensation. This whole line looks very interesting and deserves some tests: Deep Fritz 7 likes White at first, but after 16.Bd2 bxc6 17.Qf3 the evaluation drops to equal. Regardless of Fritz's numbers, human instinct tells me the ensuing play will be more fun for Black than for White.

**11...h6**

Here again Black has a range of choices, most of which are worse.

**12.exf6 hxg5 13.0-0**

Here 13.Bd3!? is an interesting suggestion that the authors of *Danish Dynamite* like but do not pursue in any detail. Serious Vikings will want to fire up their favorite software and do some deep position analysis on 13...d5 and 13...gxf4.

**13...cxb5 14.Nd5 Qc6 15.Re1+ Kd8 16.f5 Ne5?!**

Müller and Voigt criticize this move. But I haven't yet fathomed their suggestion of 16...gxf6 17.Nxf6 (?) since 17...Ne5!, which they do not mention, looks very good for Black. But it may not matter: after 16...gxf6 17.f5g6! Be6 (17...fxg6 18.Nxf6 gives White an overwhelming attack, e.g. 18...d5 19.Re8+ Kc7 20.Nxd5+ Kd7 21.Re4 and the other Rook will quickly come to d1.) 18.Rxe6! fxe6 19.Nxf6 Qc5+ 20.Be3 Qe5 21.Ng4! Qf5 22.Qc3! e5 23.Rc1! Ke7 24.Rf1! Qxg6 (24...Qxg4 25.Qc7+ Ke8 26.Qxb7 Rc8 27.g7 Any questions?) 25.Nxe5! and Black is toast.

**17.Bxg5**

Here Müller and Voigt improve for White, offering the idea 17.fxg7 Bxg7 18.Bxg5+ f6 19.Nxf6 with a strong attack. This looks like an understatement -- Black is virtually lost, e.g. 19...Bxf5 (19...Qc5+ 20.Kh1 Kc7 21.Rac1 Nc4 22.Re7+ Kb8 23.Rxg7 Qxf5 24.Qc3 +- and Black has no good answer to the coming b3.) 20.Rac1 Nc4 21.Ne8+ Kc8 22.Nxg7 Bd7 23.Qg3 and once again b3 is fatal. Any attack on the N/g7 can be met with Re7.

**17...Qc5+ 18.Kh1 g6 19.Rxe5 dxe5 20.Rc1 Qd6 21.fxg6 Rh5**

There is more resistance, but not ultimate salvation, in 21...Be6 22.g7 Rg8 23.Rd1 and Black's pieces all find themselves on very unfortunate squares.

**22.Nc7 Rxg5 23.Qxf7 Rxg2 24.Qe8# 1-0**

Now for a game where Black tries the key alternative at move 10 but falters shortly -- an absolutely typical turn of events.

*Szymanowska,K (2130) - Chmielinska,A (2065)*  
ch-Pol u20 Women Brzeg Dolny POL (9), 15.02.2001

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.c3 dxc3 5.Bc4 d6 6.Nxc3 Nf6 7.Qb3 Qd7 8.Ng5 Ne5 9.Bb5 c6 10.f4 cxb5**

In the past decade this has become the critical line, and if Black's defensive resources prove adequate (which is not yet clear) White may be motivated to take another look at 9.Be2.

**11.fxe5 dxe5 12.Be3**



This position used to be thought clearly superior for White, but now it looks as though Black might thread his way to equality along a tightrope. As a practical matter, however, a line like this is nearly a sure loss for Black unless he has made a special study of it.

**12...Bd6?**

Unfortunately this is not the way to achieve equality. A long and heavily-analyzed line runs 12...a5 13.0-0 a4 14.Qxb5 Bd6 (14...Qxb5?? 15.Nxb5 is winning for White as Black cannot find a decent square for his Rook, e.g. 15...Ra5 16.Nc7+ Ke7 17.Bb6 etc.) 15.Qe2! This is the only good way for White to maintain the pressure. 15...h6 16.Rxf6! gxf6 17.Nd5! Be7 18.Ne6! White keeps

finding ingenious ways of maintaining his initiative. 18...fxe6 19.Qh5+ Kf8 20.Nb6 and either White has equalized (Konikowski, Warzecha) or he might be a bit better (Müller and Voigt).

### **13.Nxb5**

Up to this point we are following one of Alekhine's early masterpieces.

### **13...h6?**

This is, of course, a blunder. But it is not at all uncommon for the defender to come unglued in a position like this. 13...0-0 14.Rd1 Ne8 15.0-0! Qe7? (15...h6 16.Nxf7! Rxf7 17.Nxd6 Nxd6 18.Rxd6 Qxd6 19.Rxf7 Kh7 20.Qd5 is a suggestion from Müller and Voigt.) 16.Nxd6 Nxd6 17.Qa3 Rd8 18.Nxf7 Bg4 19.Rxd6 Re8 20.Bg5 Qc7 21.Qb3 Be2 22.Nxe5+ Kh8 23.Rc1 Rf8 24.Qd1!! Qa5 25.Qxe2 Qxe5 26.Rd5 1-0, Alekhine-Verlinsky, offhand game, Odessa 1918. Had Alekhine lived eighty years later I have no doubt that he would have played many such games online!

**14.Nxd6+ Qxd6 15.Qxf7+ Kd8 16.Rd1 Qxd1+ 17.Kxd1 hxg5  
18.Qxg7 Bg4+ 19.Kc1 Rc8+ 20.Kb1 1-0**

So much for 5...d6 -- but what if Black just snatches the pawn on b2? Does the development of a pair of Knights favor Black or White? Probably White, but in any event the games that can develop are tremendously interesting:

*Houska,J (2115) - Wright,F*  
**Faber Cup, Glenalmond SCO (3), 1996**

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.c3 dxc3 5.Bc4 cxb2 6.Bxb2 d6 7.0-0**

Müller and Voigt argue that 7.Qb3 may actually be the most precise move here. It does have the virtue of forestalling Black's following defensive maneuver.

**7...Be6 8.Bxe6 fxe6 9.Qb3 Qd7!**

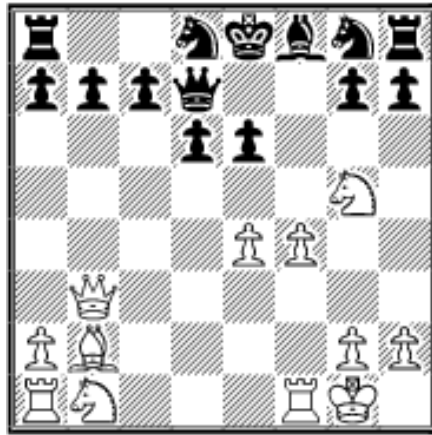
Now White's Bishop on b2 is a bit of a liability. By contrast with the Göring line that could have arisen after 5...d6 6.Nxc3 Be6 7.Bxe6 fxe6 8.Qb3 Qd7, White cannot take the b-pawn here because he would lose a piece to ...Rb8.

### **10.Ng5**

The standard solution, which may even be the right reaction in the line

mentioned in the previous note. White will throw his f-pawn forward to f5 and make use of the weakened light squares.

**10...Nd8 11.f4**



**11...Nh6!?**

This move is so obscure that it eluded Müller and Voigt in their generally very thorough work. Yet it has its points. The Knight presses on f5 for the moment, discouraging White from pushing. It also covers f7 and in a moment Black will try to exchange Knights by ...Nhf7.

**12.Qh3**

It may be that 12.Nd2 right away is more precise, giving White the flexibility to play either Knight to f3 and connecting his Rooks.

**12...Qe7**

Black blinks. One logical, if somewhat risky, course would be to offer an exchange of Queens with 12...e5 White's thematic response is 13.f5 , but after 13...d5 14.Bxe5 Nhf7 it isn't clear how White should create problems for Black's exposed King. Probably best is 15.Qh5 when my favorite fantasy line runs 15...Qe7 16.Bf4 g6 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.Qxg6 Rh6 19.Qg8 Qf6 20.Nxf7! Rg6! 21.Nd6+ cxd6 22.Qxd5 Qxa1 23.Qb5+ Ke7 24.Bg5+ Rxg5 25.Qxg5+ Ke8 26.Qh5+ Kd7 27.Qb5+ and neither side can afford to break the perpetual.

**13.Nd2 Nhf7 14.Nxh7**

Since Black's Rook is defended, however oddly, by the Knight at f7, this self-pinning pawn grab requires strong nerves. Of course the trade-off is that Black's Knight cannot move or else White will play Nf6+ and Qxh8.

**14...Nc6 15.f5 e5 16.f6!**

This is how the Knight is freed!

**16...gxf6 17.Nxf6+?!**

Giving Black an opportunity -- needlessly. 17.Qf5 keeps Queens on the board, which is definitely to White's advantage.

### **17...Kd8?**

Missing the last chance. 17...Qxf6 18.Rxf6 Rxd3 19.gxh3 is not at all bad for Black. White's e-pawn requires babysitting, his h-pawns are not much of a menace, and ... golly, where are the rest of his pawns??

### **18.Qb3 Kc8?**

Putting the King on the wrong square. 18...Na5 would minimize the damage.

### **19.Nd5!**

Very unpleasant: Black must lose a piece because any normal Queen move is met by 20.Rxf7 and 21.Nb6+.

### **19...Qh4 20.Rxf7 Qxh2+**

A couple of checks are not a good substitute for a piece.

### **21.Kf2 Qh4+ 22.Qg3 Qxg3+ 23.Kxg3 Bh6 24.Rxc7+**

Now we get an attractive bit of play with the White Knights assisting the Rook.

### **24...Kb8 25.Nc4 Nb4 26.Nxd6 Nxd5 27.Rxb7# 1-0**

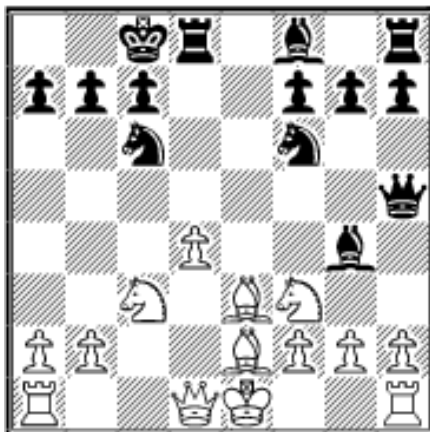
Black often declines both the Danish and the Göring with an early ...d5. But here, too, some theoretical knowledge cannot be dispensed with. Witness the following game in which a rising American junior destroys her opponent without apparent effort:

*Frenklakh, J (2150) - Borek, G*  
US Open, Alexandria USA (8), 1996

**1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.c3 d5 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.cxd4 Bg4 7.Be2  
0-0-0**

Who could call this active-looking move a mistake? Yet here Black misses his chance to enter the Capablanca Variation, and from here on White seems to have all of the really interesting ideas ... and all of the fun.

**8.Nc3 Qh5 9.Be3 Nf6**

**10.Qa4**

Here 10.h3 may be more accurate immediately. 10...Nb4 is Deep Fritz 7's initial preference, but after 11.0-0 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 Qg6 13.Rc1 Nd3 14.Qb3 c6 15.Rcd1 DF7 recognizes that Black is losing his shirt. Instead, 10...Bd6 11.Qa4 Rhe8 (11...a6 12.0-0-0 Bd7 13.Bxa6 Nxd4 14.Bxb7+ Kxb7 15.Qxd4 +/- leaves Black's King much more

exposed than White's.) 12.0-0-0! Bd7 13.d5 Nb8 14.Qxa7 +/-.

**10...Bb4 11.0-0 Nd5 12.h3 Nxc3??**

A serious miscalculation in a difficult position. 12...Bd7 13.Ng5! Nxc3 14.bxc3 Qxe2 15.cxb4 leaves White with all the attacking chances -- and a fork on f7 to boot.

**13.bxc3 Bxf3**

Unfortunately, 13...Bxc3 14.hxg4 leaves Black without time to nab the Rook in the corner.

**14.Bxf3 Qa5 15.Bxc6 1-0**

Black decides that a pawn isn't much for a piece and calls it a day.

Finally, for light relief, here is an older game where Black gets his columns crossed and never recovers:

*Levy,D - Mengarini,A*  
Ch United States, Open, 1964

**1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.Bc4 cxb2 5.Bxb2 Nc6 6.Nf3 d5?**

Isn't this the standard freeing move? No -- with a Knight on c6 Black has no business playing d5, as White rapidly explains to him.

**7.exd5 Nce7**

Just to prove that 7...Qe7+ doesn't solve Black's problems either, have a look at the following miniature: 8.Be2 Nd8 Is this any way to treat a Knight? 9.0-0 Nf6 10.Re1 This simple move sets up devastating threats on the e-file. 10...Ne4 11.Bb5+ c6 12.Ba3! Qf6 13.Rxe4+ Ne6 14.dxc6 1-0 Penrose-Pryor, England 1980.

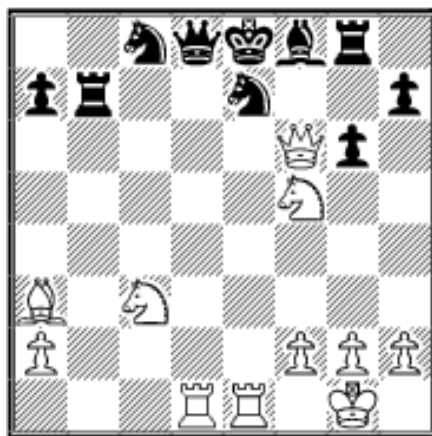
**8.0-0 Nf6 9.Re1 Bg4 10.Qa4+ Bd7 11.Qb3**

Black is tied hand and foot. It is amusing to see how White delivers the coup de grace, but one feels almost sorry for Black ... almost ...

**11...b5 12.Bxb5 Bxb5 13.Qxb5+ Qd7 14.Qb7 Qc8 15.Qc6+ Nd7 16.Ba3**

The position just gets worse and worse!

**16...Rb8 17.d6! cxd6 18.Qxd6 Qd8 19.Nd4 Nb6 20.Qg3 Rb7 21.Nf5 Nbc8 22.Nc3 g6 23.Qe5 f6 24.Qxf6 Rg8 25.Rad1**



**25...Rd7 26.Nxe7 Bxe7 27.Rxd7 Qxd7 28.Bxe7 1-0**

There is no salvation in 28...Nxd7 29.Nd5 when everything falls apart on e7.

No, Black was not the underdog from the club down at the local bar: he was a powerful Senior Master who got confused and could not recover. These things happen when

White understands the Danish/Göring complex and Black does not.

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