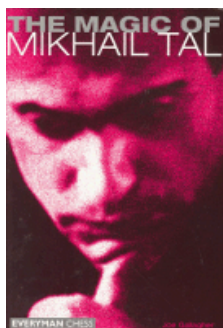




COLUMNISTS

The Openings Explained

Abby Marshall



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The Openings Explained

The Two Knights Defense, Keidanz Variation [C55]

In this column I examine the wonderful Keidanz variation, a black response against the Scotch Gambit. While it does demand memorization and theoretical knowledge, I always found the variations fun, interesting, and full of tactics. I believe that it also has great practical value over-the-board and in blitz, because if White does not know what to do, he or she will be crushed quickly. The drawback is that White of course can sidestep the variation, but it is still useful to have in your repertoire and will teach you about tactics and attacking the king.

Theory

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d4 exd4 5.e5 d5 6.Bb5 Ne4 7.Nxd4 Bc5



The potentially exciting Keidanz variation.

8.Nxc6

If two beginners were playing this game, it would initially seem that Black had overlooked that the knight on c6 was attacked twice and defended once. Unfortunately I have to say potentially, because White can always sidestep the fun with 8.Be3. This would steer the game into mainstream lines in which Black does not have anything to fear, but that is the subject for another column.

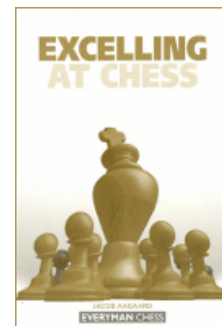
8...Bxf2+ 9.Kf1

9.Ke2 is examined in the Arnott-Hebden game.

9...Qh4



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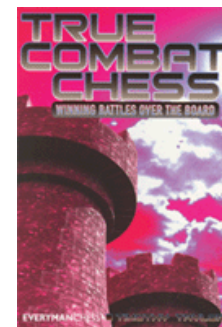
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Black has only a pawn for a piece right now, but the proximity of three dangerous pieces compensates. The knight and the queen are particularly lethal, because the queen can move as every piece except the knight, so they complement each other.

10.Qxd5

There are three main alternatives to this move.

10.Nxa7+ c6 11.Nxc8 Rxc8 12.Be2 (12.Bd3 Ng3+ 13.hxg3 Qxh1+ 14.Ke2 Qxg2 15.Qf1 Qxf1+ 16.Kxf1 Bxg3—+ So, Black has a rook and two passed pawns for the two pieces. Advantage to Black. Plus look at the white queenside.) 12...Ba7 13.Qe1 Nf2 14.c3



This is to take away the d4-square from the black queen. Right now the knight cannot capture on h1 because it is pinned. 14...0-0 15.Nd2 Qe7 16.Rg1 Qxe5 17.Nf3 Ng4



18.Qh4 Qe4 19.Rh1 Rfe8 20.Qe1 Re6—+ Black will double rooks on the e-file. Notice how easy it is for Black to play. Black is down a piece, but can logically improve the position.;

10.Nd4+ c6 11.Nf3 (11.Be2 Bxd4 12.Qxd4 Ng3+;



11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Bxc6+ Ke7-/+))



11...Ng3+ 12.Kxf2 Ne4+ 13.Ke3 Qf2+ 14.Kd3 Bf5! 15.Nd4



15...Bg6=/+ 16.Nd2? Nd6+ 17.Kc3 Nxb5+ 18.Nxb5 Qe3+ 19.Kb4 a5+ 20. Ka4 cxb5+ 21.Kxb5 Bf5 It is mate in three.;

10.Nc3 0-0 11.Nxe4 dxe4 12.Nd4 (12.Nb4 Rd8 13.Qe2 Bg4+) 12...c5 13. Nb3 Bg4 14.Be2 Rad8 15.Bd2 f5 16.Qc1 Bxe2+ 17.Kxe2 f4+ The nice pawns on f4 and e4 guarantee a winning attack.

10...Bc5!

Keidanz's move.

11.Nd4+

11.Be3!! This incredible move was played in the Clark-Morss game given below.;

11.g3 Qh3+ 12.Ke1 Bf2+ 13.Ke2 (13.Kd1 Bg4+ 14.Be2 Qg2!



15.Bxg4 Qxh1+ 16.Ke2 Nxc3+ 17.Kxf2 Qxd5) 13...Qg4+ 14.Kd3 Nc5+ 15. Kc3 0-0 16.Ne7+ Kh8 17.Qd1 Ne4+ 18.Kb3 Qe6+ 19.Qd5 Nc5+ 20.Kc3 Qxe7+ Material is even, but look at White's queenside, a reoccurring embarrassment for White in this variation, and White's king.

11...c6 12.Be3



12...0-0 13.Qb3

13.Bxc6 bxc6 14.Qxc6 Be6— Black just has to give up two pawns for this position?

13...Be6 14.Bc4

14.Nf3 Ng3+ 15.Ke1 Qh5 16.Qc3 Bxe3 17.Qxe3 Nxh1—+.

14...Bxd4 15.Bxd4 b5! 16.Bxe6 fxe6+ 17.Ke2 Rf2+ 18.Bxf2 Qxf2+ 19.Kd1 Rd8+—+

Painful. This was not White's best, but what is most natural. 10.Nxa7 may be the best. Nothing leads immediately to any conclusion in that variation, but Black, despite the piece minus, has a good position.

Lessons Learned

1. 9...Qh4 and 10...Bc5! are the keys to the variation.
2. Logically improve the position. The pressure is on White to defend against all of Black's moves, while Black only has to try out attacking ideas.
3. King safety and development are more important than material in this variation. It is worth examining situations where material is not the first priority, as it is in most cases.

Games

This game illustrates White's alternative 9.Ke2. Black should have won, but made a key mistake. This is a sharp variation that demands precision.

Arnott,Jonathan (2126) - Hebden,Mark (2560)
BCF-ch rapidplay Halifax (1), 15.11.2003

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Nf6 5.e5 d5 6.Bb5 Ne4 7.Nxd4 Bc5 8.Nxc6 Bxf2+ 9.Ke2

This looks weird, but it is important.

9...Bg4+

9...Qh4 This is not as good as the text, but the following is interesting. As I've said before, my objective is not just to teach about openings, but about chess. 10.Qxd5 a6 11.Nd8+! axb5 12.Qxf7+ Kxd8 13.Rd1+ Nd6 14.exd6 Bg4+ 15.Kf1 Bxd1 16.Qxg7 Qc4+ 17.Kxf2 Qe2+ 18.Kg3 Qe1+ 19.Kh3 Bg4+!! The saving move! 20.Qxg4 (20.Kxg4 Ra4+ 21.c4 Rxc4+ 22.Kf3 Qf1+ 23.Kg3 Qe1 +=) 20...Qxc1 21.dxc7+ Kxc7 22.Qg7+ Kc6 23.Qf6+ Kd7 24.Qd4+ Kc6=;

9...Qd7!? This alternative to 9...Bg4 also looks weird. 10.e6! (10.Nd4 c6 11.Ba4 Qg4+ 12.Nf3 Bb6—



13.Qf1 Nf2-+) 10...fxe6 11.Nxa7!? c6 12.Nxc8 Qxc8 13.Bd3 0-0 14.Nd2 Nxd2 15.Kxd2 e5 unclear. Black remains down a piece, but in terms of time and space he has the edge.

10.Kf1 Qh4 11.Qxd5

11.Qd3 a6 12.Ba4 Bd7-+ Black gets the piece back.

11...Ng3+?

This is bad. 11...Bb6!



12.Nd4+ c6 13.Qxe4 (13.Bxc6+ bxc6 14.Qxc6+ (14.Qxe4 Bxd4 15.Qxd4 Be2+)



14...Bd7 15.Qxa8+ Ke7 16.Bg5+ Nxg5 17.Qd5 Rd8-+) 13...Bxd4 14.Qxd4 Be2+ 15.Bxe2 Qxd4 unclear.



Black has a pawn and a queen for three minor pieces. Usually three minors are better than a queen, but in this case Black is better because of White's sleeping queenside.

12.hxg3 Qxh1+ 13.Kxf2+- 0-0

White has three minor pieces for the rook and is easily winning. His exposed king gave Black some counterplay and he was able to temporarily stave off defeat, but eventually White won.

14.Ne7+



14...Kh8 15.Bg5 Rad8 16.Qe4 Rd1 17.Qxg4 Qe1+ 18.Kf3 Qxe5 19.Be2 Rh1 20.Be3 Qxe7 21.Bd4 f5 22.Qf4 c5 23.Bf2 b5 24.Be3 Qf6 25.c3 a6 26.Kf2 Qe7 27.Qg5 Rf6 28.Qf4 h6 29.Qb8+ Kh7 30.Qc8 c4 31.a4 Re6 32.Qc5 Qxc5 33.Bxc5 Rc1 34.Be3 Rc2 35.axb5 axb5 36.Ra7 Rxb2 37.Bd4 Rg6 38.Na3 Rb3 39.Nc2 Rb2 40.Nb4 h5 41.Nd5 Kh6 42.Be3+ Kh7 43.Rb7 Rd6 44.Nf4 b4 45.Rxb4 Rxb4 46.cxb4 c3 47.Bd3 g6 48.Ke2 Kh6 49.Ne6+ Kh7 50.Ng5+ Kg7 51.b5 Kf6 52.b6 Rd7 53.Ba6 c2 54.b7 Rd8 55.Bc1 Rb8 56.Bf4 Rd8 57.Bd3 Rb8 58.Bxc2 Rxb7 59.Bd2 Rb5 60.Bc3+ Kxg5 61.Bd2+ Kf6 62.Bc3+ Ke7 63.Bd3 Rd5 64.Ke3 Rd8 65.Ba6 Rd6 66.Be1 Rd4 67.Be2 Re4 + 68.Kf2 Rg4 69.Kf1 Ke8 1-0

This game was played by my beloved first coach Mark Morss. It is great for understanding the complexity of the variation. I used Mark's notes when annotating this game.

Robert Clark - Mark Morss

USCF corr. 92CM76

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d4 exd4 5.e5 d5 6.Bb5 Ne4 7.Nxd4 Bc5 8.Nxc6 Bxf2+ 9.Kf1 Qh4

In his notes to the game, Mark said that he discovered a very extensive analysis of the Keidanz variation in the 1916 edition of the *Handbuch des Schachspiels* (edited by Karl Schlechter). This was a correspondence game, so such research is possible during the game. Over-the-board, even if Black did not know all the variations, I would say that Black has more practical chances than White. It is easier to attack than defend.

10.Qxd5 Bc5! 11.Be3!!

Mark gives this a double exclamation. Objectively the move is not that good, but Keidanz did not think of this move in his analysis, probably because it looks crazy. However it is a great winning try.

11...Ng3+

This is safe, but not the best and does not lead to an advantage.

11...Bxe3?! This variation illustrates the point of 11.Be3. 12.g3 Qh3+! (12...Nxg3+ 13.hxg3



13...Bh3+ 14.Ke2 Qxg3 15.Nd4+ Ke7 16.Qf3 Qg5 17.Rxh3 Bxd4 18.Rh5 Qc1 19.Bc4 Raf8 20.Rf5 Bxb2 21.Rxf7+ Rxf7 22.Qxf7+ Kd8 23.Nd2+-) 13. Ke2



The point of Be3 is that when the White king is driven all over the place with checks, it picks up a tempo by attacking the Black bishop on e3. 13...Bg5 14. Qxe4 Qg4+ 15.Qxg4 Bxg4+ 16.Kf2 a6 17.Ba4 Bd7 18.h4 Bh6 19.Nc3 bxc6+/
=



Black has the two bishops, but weak queenside pawns. White also has very active pieces. This gives White an edge.;

11...0-0! This is winning. Fittingly, it looks equally as strange as 11.Be3. 12. g3 (12.Bxc5 bxc6 13.Qxc6 Qf4+ 14.Kg1 Nxc5 15.Nc3 White defends the back rank against a Qc1 check. 15...Qd4+ 16.Kf1 Bb7 17.Qxc7 Rac8 18.Qa5 Ne4+-) 12...bxc6 13.gxh4 cxd5 14.Bxc5 Nxc5



White has terrible pawns and development.

12.hxg3 Qxh1+ 13.Kf2

13.Ke2 Bg4+-+ 14.Kf2 Bxe3+ 15.Kxe3 Qe1+ 16.Kd4 0-0.

13...Bxe3+ 14.Kxe3 0-0

14...Bd7 15.Nb8! Qe1+ 16.Kf3 Bxb5 17.Qxb5+ c6 18.Qxb7 I don't think Black has a perpetual here. Maybe it's okay for Black because White has poor development and an exposed king, but why risk this. 18...0-0 19.Qxa8 Qxe5 unclear.

15.Ne7+ Kh8 16.Nxc8?

The knight is active, while the bishop is lying dormant on c8. 16.Qe4 This is necessary. White targets the Black kingside. 16...Qc1+ 17.Kf3 Qxb2 18.Bd3 g6 (18...f5? 19.Ng6+ hxg6 20.Qh4+ Kg8 21.Bc4+-) 19.Qf4 Rg8 20.Qf6+ (20.Nxg8 Kxg8 21.Bc4 Be6-+ White is losing a rook on a1.) 20...Rg7 21.Nxg6+ fxg6 22.Qf8+ Rg8= This may be the best for White in the Keidanz variation. It leads to equality, a triumph for the black player. 23.Qf6+ Rg7 24.Qf8+ Rg8.

16...Qc1+ 17.Qd2 Qxb2 18.Qd4 Qxb5 19.Ne7 Rae8 20.Nc3 Qb2 21.Rb1 Qxc2 22.Ned5 Qxg2 23.Ne4

White seems to have formed a nice cocoon around his king.

23...c5! 24.Qxc5 f5 0-1

After 25.Nd6 Rxe5+ 26. Kd4 Qxf2+! Black wins.

Future Reading

- *Handbuch des Schachspiels*, 1916 edition. Well, obviously this is not easily attainable, though for those who live in Cleveland, the library should have it. I give a good overview in the column, but it is not exhaustive. Independent research should be sufficient, with the help of Fritz, to verify that other White moves are not challenging.

Practitioners

- Dr. Hermann Keidanz. He was born in 1865 in what is now Poland. He was a Jewish Polish-German master who played throughout Europe in the 1890s.

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