



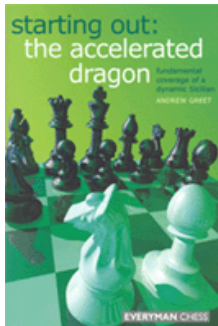
COLUMNISTS

The Openings Explained

Abby Marshall

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The Openings Explained

The Accelerated Dragon [B36]

This month I look at the Accelerated Dragon. It isn't as violent and theoretical as the main line Dragon, and in its ideal form it follows a formula for piece development that should be copied as closely as possible. It is relatively easy to play and a good introduction for those who want to play the Sicilian. The drawback is that it is drawish in many cases, though from Black's point of view this isn't so bad. The variation under consideration is called the Gurgendize System. It is an answer to when White plays the Maróczy Bind. The Classical Variation is too passive for my taste.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 g6

I recommend the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon move-order, as this bypasses the Rossilimo variation.

2...Nc6 is the main way to reach the basic position. 3.d4 (3.Bb5 White has this well-respected option, the Rossilimo, which I am trying to avoid with 2...g6. Of course, if Black has something prepared against this, then it makes sense to play 2...Nc6.) 3...cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 This is the basic position of the Accelerated Dragon. (4...Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 is the Sicilian Dragon. I may look at an interesting sideline in this variation in the future. It is interesting to note that there are many cases where expert-rated players have beat grandmasters in the Dragon. Many people, when playing a stronger player, try to get out of theory as fast as possible. This is a huge mistake! Amateurs have the best chances to beat titled players in these super-sharp theoretical lines. A GM will beat a weaker player in an even position, but keep it theoretical and you know that you are playing perfectly.

3.d4

This is the typical way to introduce the Open Sicilian, though Black should be aware of some alternative move orders; for instance, 3.c4 Nc6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Nf6 and we have transposed to the basic position.

3...cxd4 4.Nxd4

4.Qxd4 By playing 2...g6, Black has avoided the Rossilimo but White now has this option. It comes down to whether Black prefers to play against this or 3.Bb5. 4...Nf6 5.e5 Nc6 6.Qa4 Nd5 The play gets sharp from here, but Black emerges okay. I won't cover it here, but Greet analyzes this in the first chapter of [Starting Out: The Accelerated Dragon](#). I am using this as my reference for this column.

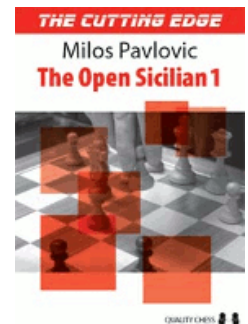
4...Nc6 5.c4

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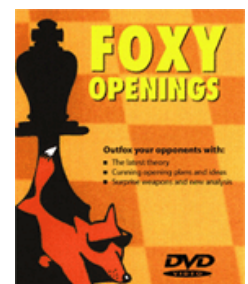
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[FEN "r1bqkbnr/pp1ppp1p/2n3p1/8/2PNP3/8/PP3PPP/RNBQKB1R b KQkq c3 0 5"]

This is the Maróczy Bind, considered one of White's strongest responses. It aims to restrict Black's position, prevent the freeing ...d5, and squeeze Black slowly. On the other hand, 5.c4 leaves White vulnerable on the h8-a1 diagonal and loosens White's position a little.

5...Nf6

This signifies Black's interest in the Gurgendze System. Black delays the natural ...Bg7 to stop White from playing Be3. Black does this because he wants to play ...Nxd4 and force White to recapture with the queen.

6.Nc3

This is the most natural and the best way to defend the pawn.

6...d6 7.Be2

White has a few choices here:

7.Nc2 This move raises an interesting point. First of all, the knight avoids Black's scheme of development and retreats to a good square. From c2, the knight covers the important b4-square and can possibly jump to e3. It also avoids exchanges. When you have more space, you should avoid exchanges, since you have more of the opponent's pieces to cramp. However, it isn't about exchanging or not exchanging, but about what pieces to exchange in order to maximize your space. So here, White is not necessarily gaining anything by avoiding an exchange, even though he does have more space; the knights are of equal value in the position. It is a perfectly viable choice however. 7...Bg7 Black develops naturally. 8.Be2 Nd7 This is fairly typical for the Sicilian. Black unleashes the bishop's reach and moves the knight to White's loosened queenside. 9.Bd2 White prevents the doubling of pawns in the event that Black plays ...Bxc3. (9.0-0?! White misses Black's idea. 9...Bxc3 10.bxc3 Nc5 Players are advised not to give up the fianchettoed bishop, especially not the Dragon dark-squared bishop. But here, since White has retreated the knight to c2, he is not well set up to attack Black, and the weaknesses of the c-pawns and the strength of Black's knight make up for the loss of the bishop.) 9...0-0 10.0-0 a5



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/1p1nppbp/2np2p1/p7/2P1P3/2N5/PPNBBPPP/R2Q1RK1 w - a6 0 11"]

This is a move that will arise in a later variation. The idea is to gain control

over the b4-square, which in turn gives Black the c5-square for the knight, since it can't be kicked away by b2-b4. The drawback is that the black queen can no longer jump to a5, and the b5-square becomes weak. 11.Re1 Curiously now White is a little squished for space. White is going to reorganize his pieces over the next few moves. 11...Nc5 12.Bf1 b6 (12...f5!? This is active and interesting. 13.exf5 Bxf5 unclear Black has become quite active, while White now has an open e-file.) 13.Na3 White hones in on the weakened b5-square. 13...Bb7 14.Rc1 Rc8 15.Bg5 This places some pressure on the e-pawn. 15...Nd4 16.Qd2 Re8 17.f3 Nce6 Both sides are maneuvering their pieces trying for an advantage. 18.Be3 f5 I like moving the f-pawn, so maybe my enthusiasm over this move is a bit biased. It is not an easy game: Black is active, but has a weak b-pawn and weak squares on d5 and b5. 19.Nd5 fxe4 20.fxe4 Rf8 Black moves the rook back to the open file. 21.Rc3 An odd-looking move, with the idea of going to d3 to get rid of the black knight, and then going to b3 to attack the b-pawn. 21...Nc6 22.Rb3 Nc5 23.Rxb6 Rb8 Black is temporarily down a pawn since White's pieces are a little loose. 24.Rb5 White needs to move the rook away from the queen's grasp otherwise losing the exchange is likely. (24.Nb5 Na4) 24...Nxe4 25.Qd3 Nc5 It is about equal here. 26.Bxc5 dxc5 27.Nxe7+ Nxe7 28.Qxd8 Rfxd8 29.Rxe7 Bd4+ This has actually turned in Black's favor since the two bishops are extremely strong.

7.f3 This is reminiscent of the feared Yugoslav attack. White wants to play Be3, Qd2, 0-0-0, h4-h5-h6xg7, and checkmate the black king. Luckily, Black can also play some moves, and while Black has to play accurately, this system isn't so dangerous against the Accelerated Dragon. 7...Nxd4 As we will soon see, this is the key idea of the Gurgendize: force White to recapture in the center with the queen. Otherwise, White would play Be3 next move. 8.Qxd4 Bg7 9.Be3 (9.Bg5 This is not as popular. White wants the bishop closer to home on e3, because it defends the dark squares that have become loosened after f3.) 9...0-0 10.Qd2 White gets out of the path of the g7-bishop and prepares a possible Bh6. 10...a5!?



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/1p2ppbp/3p1np1/p7/2P1P3/2N1BP2/PP1Q2PP/R3KB1R w KQ a6 0 11"]

If you are familiar with the Classical variation of the Accelerated Dragon, this plan may be foreign to you. Instead of going Bd7-Bc6, Black goes Be6. The rationale is that the purpose of going Bc6 is to attack the e-pawn, but it is already defended in this position. Also, White's plan of pushing the f-pawn to annoy the bishop on e6 is not good here, since the f-pawn has already made a move. Black wants to play Be6, a4, and Nd7-c5. 11.Be2 (11.b3 This is interesting. White opens up the diagonal for the g7-bishop even more, but the idea is that the bishop will be attacking along an empty diagonal. The other idea is that after ...a4, White can push past with b4. 11...Be6 12.Rc1 Nd7 13.Bd3 Nc5 Here we are seeing all the usual conventions of Black's opening. White will not trade the bishop on e3 for the knight since the g7-bishop would be unopposed. 14.Bb1 Qb6 15.0-0 Qb4 We are following the game Dovlatov-Sazhin 2005. Black equalized.) 11...a4 Black restricts White's queenside pawns and opens the path for the black queen to go to a5. 12.0-0 (12.Rc1 Be6 13.Nd5 Nd7 14.0-0 Nc5 This is the game Polgar-Tiviakov and again Black is doing okay.) 12...Be6 13.Rab1 (13.b4 Rc8 The c-pawn is in trouble.) 13...Qa5 So we are on move fourteen for White and the play is still branching out into variations. Don't worry about memorizing the exact moves, just the ideas. When learning a new opening, first just go over the whole thing. Don't go variation by variation. After reviewing everything, you get the basic ideas and feel for the positions. Then you memorize.

a) 14.b4 axb3 15.axb3 One of the purposes of pushing the a-pawn was to give Black the open a-file after White pushed b4. 15...Ng4



[FEN "r4rk1/1p2ppbp/3pb1p1/q7/2P1P1n1/1PN1BP2/3QB1PP/1R3RK1 w - - 0 16"]

This is a nice tactical trick to be aware of. 16.Bd4 Bxd4+ 17.Qxd4 Ne5 Black has nothing to fear from a White attack, so the exchange of the g7-bishop is not a big deal, and the knight has the e5-square.

b) 14.Nd5 Qxd2 15.Bxd2 (15.Nxe7+ The usual trick doesn't work to good effect here. 15...Kh8 16.Bxd2 Rfe8 17.Nd5 Nxd5 18.cxd5 Bxd5) 15...Nxd5 16.cxd5 Bd4+! The bishop becomes active with tempo. 17.Kh1 Bd7=.

c) 14.Rfc1 Rfc8 15.b4 axb3 16.axb3 Qb4 Black opens the path of the a8-rook. See how the pawn advance to a4 opened files for Black and weakened White's pawns. 17.Rc2 Nd7 18.Nd5



[FEN "r1r3k1/1p1nppbp/3pb1p1/3N4/1qP1P3/1P2BP2/2RQB1PP/1R4K1 b - - 0 18"]

Black does have weaknesses on queenside squares, so White trades into an endgame to lessen the pressure on the queenside. 18...Qxd2 19.Rxd2 Kf8 20.b4 (20.Nf4 This looks attractive, since it is going to double Black's pawns on the e-file, but because the position is semi-closed the knight may be at least equal to the bishop. 20...Bc3 21.Rc2 Bb4 Another drawback of the knight move is the black bishop relocates to more favorable prospects.) 20...Ra3 21.Kf2 f5!? Black attempts to undermine the white position. Of course, we are pretty deep into the game, so the rest should not be committed to memory, but studied to see the various interactions of the pieces and characteristics of the position. 22.exf5 (22.Bg5 Bxd5 Black is pretty much forced to exchange the bishop for the knight now. 23.exd5 Nb6 24.c5 Na4 Black doesn't want to capture on c5 and open files for the white d-rook and white bishops. 25.cxd6 exd6 26.Bf4 Be5 27.Bxe5 dxe5 28.d6 Nc3 unclear) 22...Bxf5 23.Rbd1 Nf6 24.Nb6 Rc6 25.c5 Rxe3! This is a masterful example of understanding the value of the pieces. The dark-squared bishop is at least equal to the rook. 26.Kxe3 Bh6+ 27.f4 dxc5 28.Rd8+ Kg7 29.bxc5 Re6+ 30.Kf2 Bxf4 Black gave up the exchange to have the two bishops basically against vulnerable white pawns and a vulnerable king. 31.Nd5 Nxd5 32.R1xd5 Be3+ 33.Kf1 Be4 34.R5d7 Bc6 35.Bf3 Bb5+ Of course, Black is not aiming to win back the exchange. 36.Be2 Rf6+ 37.Ke1 Bf2+ 38.Kd1 Ba4+ 39.Kc1 Bxc5 40.Rxb7 Bc6 41.Rdd7 An odd-looking move that is probably one of the best. 41...Ba3+ 42.Kd1 Ba4+ 43.Ke1 Bb4+ 44.Rxb4 Bxd7 No more opposite-colored bishops! Black won this game, by the way. Volokitin-Jakovenko 2007.

7.Be3 Ng4 White made a mistake.

7...Nxd4

This is one of the trademarks of the Accelerated Dragon. White was ready to play 8.Be3, so Black acts to force White to recapture with the queen.

8.Qxd4 Bg7

The same ideas we saw earlier are going to apply here as well.

9.Bg5

9.0-0 0-0 10.Qe3 (10.Qd3 This is meant to avoid the ...Qb6 idea. 10...Be6 11. Bd2 Nd7 Black sticks to the conventional scheme of development. 12.b3 a5 Secure the c5-square. 13.Rac1 Nc5 14.Qe3 Bd7 Black re-routes the bishop in anticipation of White's idea. Notice here that f3 has not been played, so the e4-pawn could become a target. 15.f4 Bc6 16.Bf3 e6 This is a complicated and interesting position, roughly equal.) 10...Be6 11.Bd2 (11.Rb1 Qb6!? Trading queens in this fashion opens the a-file for Black and makes for good play. 12. Qxb6 (12.Qd3 Nd7 13.Nd5 Bxd5 14.exd5 Rfc8 15.Qh3 Nc5 16.Bg5 Ne4 Black is doing fine.) 12...axb6 13.Be3 Rfc8 14.b3 b5



[FEN "r1r3k1/1p2ppbp/3pbn1/1p6/2P1P3/1PN1B3/P3BPPP/1R3RK1 w - - 0 15"]

White can't capture this pawn without losing material and Black has a great position.) 11...Qb6 Here is this common motif! 12.b3 (12.Qxb6 axb6 13.a4 White is a bit smarter about this whole ...b5 tactic. 13...Nd7 14.Ra3 Nc5



[FEN "r4rk1/1p2ppbp/1p1pb1p1/2n5/P1P1P3/R1N5/1P1BBPPP/5RK1 w - - 0 15"]

15.Rfa1 Bxc3 Black wins a pawn temporarily, though it probably doesn't lead to more than equality. 16.Bxc3 Nxe4 17.Bd4 Rfc8 18.Re3 Bxc4 19.Rxe4 Bxe2 20.Bc3 (20.Rxe2 Rxa4 21.Rd1 Rxd4+) 20...Bb5 21.Rxe7 Bxa4 22. Rxb7 Bc6 23.Rba7 Black is up a pawn, but it is opposite-colored bishops and White has a rook on the seventh.) 12...Qxe3 13.Bxe3 Nd7 14.Rac1 Nc5 Black is doing fine.

9.Be3 The other main move is 9.Bg5. As we will see, the two moves transpose in the main line. 9...0-0 10.Qd2 Be6 11.0-0 (11.Rc1 Qa5 12.f3 Rfc8 13.b3 transposes to the type of endgame position found in the 9.Bg5

lines. 13...a6 14.Na4 Qxd2+ 15.Kxd2 Nd7 Black has defended everything and is solid.) 11...Qa5 White has some choices here:

a) 12.Rab1 Rfc8 13.b3 (13.b4 Qd8 14.c5 This is pretty aggressive, but Black can lash back. 14...a5 15.a3 axb4 16.axb4 Ra3 17.Nb5 Ra2 18.Qd3 dxc5 19.bxc5 Qxd3 20.Bxd3 Ng4 21.Bd4 Rd2 Black has no problems.) 13...Ng4 14.Nd5 (14.Bd4 Bxd4 15.Qxd4 Qc5 White has chosen a more aggressive mode of play, so Black aims to exchange queens and reorganizes their pieces. 16.Qd3 Nf6 17.Kh1 Bd7 18.f4 a5 19.a4?! This leaves the b-pawn backward. 19...Bc6 20.Nd5 Re8 21.Rbd1 (21.Nc7 Bxe4) 21...Rad8=) 14...Qxd2 15.Bxd2 Kf8 I examine this position in the second illustrative game.

b) 12.Rfc1 Here Black has a trick. 12...Nxe4 13.Nxe4 Qxd2 14.Nxd2 Bxb2 Players are taught that two pieces are better than a rook and a pawn, sometimes even a rook and two pawns. Here, we need to consider the nature of the position. Black gets the two pawns and the white queenside pawns are weak. 15.Bf3



[FEN "r4rk1/pp2pp1p/3pb1p1/8/2P5/4BB2/Pb1N1PPP/R1R3K1 b - - 0 15"]

15...Rab8 16.Bxa7 Ra8 17.Be3 Bxc1 18.Rxc1 Rxa2 19.Bxb7 Rb8=.

c) 12.f3 Rfc8 Same old, same old. 13.Rfc1 (13.b3 Ng4) 13...Nd7 (13...Bxc4? 14.Nd5 Qxd2 15.Nxe7+ Kf8 16.Bxd2 Kxe7 17.Rxc4 +/-) 14.Rab1 Bxc4 15.Nd5 Qxd2 16.Nxe7+ Kf8 17.Bxd2 Bd4+ 18.Kh1 Kxe7 19.Bxc4 The structure of the position is the same, but Black has more activity. 19...Nb6 20.Bb3 Rc6 21.Rd1 Rac8 unclear.

d) 12.Rac1 a6 13.f4 (13.f3 Rfc8 14.b3 b5 Black has carried out the formulaic plan and has a good position. This position is so important that it should be committed to memory. 15.Nd5 (15.cxb5 axb5 16.Nxb5 (16.Bxb5 Rxc3 17.Qxc3 Qxb5 Black has two pieces for the rook and pawn.) 16...Qxd2 17.Rxc8+ Bxc8 18.Bxd2 Rxa2 19.Rd1 Be6=+) 15...Qxd2 16.Bxd2 Nxd5 17.exd5 Bd4+ Remember this idea. The bishop check makes the bishop more active without loss of tempo. It can move on both the h8-a1 diagonal and the g1-a7 diagonal. 18.Kh1 Bd7) 13...b5 14.cxb5 (14.f5 Bxc4 15.Bxc4 bxc4) 14...axb5 15.f5 Bc4 Black has nothing to fear.

9...0-0 10.Qd2

10.Qe3 This retreat is clumsy. 10...Be6 11.0-0 Qb6



[FEN "r4rk1/pp2ppbp/1q1pbnp1/6B1/2P1P3/2N1Q3/PP2BPPP/R4RK1 w - - 0 12"]

Motif! 12.Qxb6 (12.b3 Qxe3 13.Bxe3 Nd7) 12...axb6 13.Rac1 Rfc8 14.b3 b5.

10...Be6 11.Rc1

11.0-0 Qa5 12.Rad1 (12.Rac1 a6 Notice that ...a6 usually means ...b5 is in the works. 13.b3 b5 We will look at this position in the first illustrative game.; 12.f3? Bxc4 13.Bxc4 Qc5+ 14.Kh1 Qxc4) 12...a6 13.Bxf6 (13.f4 b5 14.e5 b4 You will just have to memorize this sequence. 15.Nd5 Bxd5 16.exf6 exf6) 13...Bxf6 14.Nd5 Qxd2 15.Nxf6+ Kg7 This is not a move you see often. It is meant to make the pawn structure favorable for Black. 16.Nh5+ gxh5 17.Rxd2 h4 18.b3 Rac8 Black has the open g-file and possibility of counterplay with ...b5.

11...Qa5 12.f3

12.0-0 a6 transposes to an earlier line: 11.0-0 Qa5 12.Rac1 a6.

12...Rfc8 13.b3

13.Nd5 Qxd2+ 14.Kxd2 Nxd5 15.cxd5 f6 Black is fine. The bishop will retreat to f7 and then ...e6.

13...a6 14.Na4

14.Nd5 Qxd2+ 15.Kxd2 Nxd5 16.cxd5 f6.

14...Qxd2+ 15.Kxd2 Nd7

It is up for some debate as to whether Black can hold this ending.

16.g4

16.Bxe7 Bh6+ 17.Kd3 b5 18.Nb2 Ne5+ 19.Kc3 Bg7!? Even in boring endgames there is still interesting play. White clearly cannot pawn grab. 20.Kc2 Nc6 21.Bxd6 Nd4+.



[FEN "r1r3k1/5pbp/p2Bb1p1/lp6/2PnP3/1P3P2/PNK1B1PP/2R4R w - - 0 22"]

16...f6 17.Be3 f5

Now it is easy to see how the same endgame position could be reached if the bishop went to 9.Be3 or 9.Bg5.

18.exf5

18.gxf5 gxf5 19.Rhg1 Kh8 20.Bd3 (20.Nc3 fxe4 21.fxe4 Bf7 22.Nd5 e6 Black's king looks like it is caught in the rain without an umbrella, but in reality it is well defended and Black is okay.) 20...f4! 21.Bxf4 Rf8 22.Bg5 (22.Ke3 Rxf4 23.Kxf4 Bd4 The white king is experiencing some peril.) 22...Rxf3=.

18...gxf5 19.h3

19.g5 d5 Closing the position is not advisable. Black opens the center and

may drum up play against the white king.

19...Rf8 20.f4

20.Nc3 b5 21.cxb5 axb5 22.Bxb5 f4 unclear.

20...Rad8 21.g5 Nc5 22.Nc3 Bd7!?

Greet notes that this is a suggestion of Tsesarsky.

23.Bf3 Bc6 24.Nd5 Rde8



[FEN "4rrk1/1p2p1bp/p1bp4/2nN1pP1/2P2P2/1P2BB1P/P2K4/2R4R w - - 0 25"]

Black is okay and has possibility for active play. For practice, I suggest playing this out against a friend and seeing if the position is okay for you, too.

This game follows a different move order to to reach the same position we looked at above. This is a pretty typical Gurgendidze game. It does not end in a lovely Black win, but it does achieve a good result for the second player.

Illescas Cordoba, M (2562) – Almasi, Z (2640)

GMA Dos Hermanas ESP (3), 21.04.2001

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.e4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.Be2 Nxd4 8.Qxd4 Bg7 9.Bg5 Qa5

We saw 9...0-0 here, but the moves transpose.

10.Qd2 Be6 11.Rc1 0-0 12.0-0

Now the knight jumps to d5/a4 are less of a worry because the king has left the center, so after the exchange of queens the king will not be ready for action.

12...a6 13.b3 b5

Now we are back in familiar territory. Black has completed the usual developmental moves and the play is forced for a few moves.

14.Nd5

14.cxb5 axb5 15.Bxb5 Rfc8



[FEN "r1r3k1/4ppbp/3pbnpl/qB4B1/4P3/1PN5/P2Q1PPP/2R2RK1 w - - 0 16"]

White's position is a bit loose, and Black should recover the pawn easily.

14...Qxd2 15.Nxe7+ Kh8 16.Bxd2 Nxe4

Shirov,A-Ivanchuk,V Amber Rapid, Monaco 1997 went 16...Rfe8 17.Nc6 Nxe4 18.Bb4 Bd7 19.cxb5 axb5 20.Bxb5 Rxa2 21.Rfe1 h5 (21...Nxf2!? 22.Rxe8+ Bxe8 23.Bxd6 Ne4 This keeps some play in the position.) 22.Re2 Rxe2 23.Bxe2 Nc5



[FEN "4r2k/3b1pb1/2Np2p1/2n4p/1B6/1P6/4BPPP/2R3K1 w - - 0 24"]

24.Bb5 Nxb3 25.Rd1 Bf8 26.h3 Kg8 27.Bxd6 Bxc6 28.Bxc6 Rd8 29.Ba4 Rxd6 ½– ½. Not the most rousing game, but a draw is still an achievement for Black.

17.Ba5 Rae8 18.Nc6

18.Nd5 leads quickly to equality. 18...Bxd5 19.cxd5 Nc3 20.Bxc3 (or 20.Bf3 Ne2+ 21.Bxe2 Rxe2) 20...Rxe2=.

18...bxc4 19.Bxc4 Bxc4 20.bxc4

20.Rxc4 This looks natural and preserves White's pawn structure. I guess the black passed d-pawn was a worry, but it is also isolated so could be a weakness.

20...Rc8 21.Ne7 Rb8 22.Rc2 Rb7



[FEN "5r1k/1r2Npbp/p2p2p1/B7/"]

White guards the second-rank and Black mirrors. This is the problem with many Gurgendze positions: they seem filled with tension as the pawn advances to ...b5, but it can also lead the way to a draw. I wouldn't play it if you had to go all out for a win, but as a drawing mechanism it is pretty solid.

23.Nd5 Rc8 24.Re1 Nf6 25.Nxf6 Bxf6 26.Bc3 Bxc3 27.Rxc3 Rb4 28.Rec1 Kg7 29.g3 Rb2 30.Rd1 Rc6 31.a3 Re2 32.Rd5 Re4 33.c5 dxc5 34.Rdxc5 1/2-1/2

It is good to show typical games, even if they are not the most fascinating to go over.

I found this next game to be very informative and interesting. Hopefully, it will spark further interest in the Gurgendze. I base my annotations on those in Greet's book.

Rowson, J – Malakhov, V
Selfoss, 2003

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.Be2 Nxd4 8.Qxd4 Bg7 9.Be3 0-0 10.Qd2 Be6 11.0-0 Qa5 12.Rab1 Rfe8 13.b3 Ng4 14.Nd5 Qxd2 15.Bxd2 Kf8



[FEN "r1r2k2/pp2ppbp/3pb1p1/3N4/2P1P1n1/1P6/P2BBPPP/1R3RK1 w - - 0 16"]

This is where I stopped in the theory section. Black has exchanged queens, which is a good sign, and White has kept the usual space advantage. What I like about this game is that it seems that Black is simply content to equalize and then draw.

16.Bg5

Greet says this is the most ambitious move. It will create an imbalance of two bishops versus bishop and knight in a semi-closed position. White has to be careful not to exchange dark-squared bishops, because it will result in a good knight versus bad bishop.

16.Bxg4 would lead to a draw. 16...Bxg4 17.Bg5 f6.

16...Bxd5

16...f6 is possible, but then the knight has no good retreat.

16...Nf6!? 17.Nxf6 Bxf6 18.Bxf6 exf6 The weak black pawns give White an edge.

17.exd5 Nf6 18.Bd3

Both sides, rather than taking the easy way to a draw, fight for an advantage.

18.Bxf6 Bxf6 is drawn.

The odd game Nunn-Pigosov 1999 went 18.Rfe1 h6 19.Bh4 Rc7 20.f3 g5 21.

Bf2 b5 22.Rbd1 b4



[FEN "r4k2/p1r1ppb1/3p1n1p/3P2p1/1pP5/1P3P2/P3BBPP/3RR1K1 w - - 0 23"]

23.c5!? Rxc5!? 24.Bxc5 dxc5 25.d6 e6 26.Bb5 Rd8 and was eventually drawn.

18...h6 19.Bd2 Nd7 20.Rfe1 a5

The natural move. Black is going to tickle White's queenside and force inroads.

21.Rbc1

21.a4 Greet considers this the lesser evil. It looks aesthetically displeasing for the White queenside and the light-squared bishop, but it does force Black to find a new plan.

21...Rc7 22.f4 (22..a4!) 22...Bd4+

22...Bb2 is another idea. 23.Rcd1 Ba3.

23.Kf1 a4 24.b4 Rac8

The white queenside pawns are coming under attack.

25.Re4 Bb2 26.Rc2 a3

The problem for White is that ...Nb6 threatens not only the c-pawn, but also ... Nxd5 working the pin on the c-file.

27.Bc3

27.f5



[FEN "2r2k2/1prnpp2/3p2pp/3P1P2/1PP1R3/p2B4/PbRB2PP/5K2 b - - 0 27"]

This looks like a better try to mix things up. 27...g5 28.h4 Nf6 29.Re2 b5=/+ (29...Nxd5? 30.cxd5 Rxc2 31.Bxc2 Rxc2 32.Bxg5 Rxe2 33.Bxh6+).

27...Nb6 28.Bxb2 axb2 29.Rxb2 Nxc4 30.Rf2

30.Bxc4 Rxc4 31.Rxc4 Rxc4 32.g3 b5! White has too many pawn weaknesses.

30...Nb6 31.Rd4 Rc1+ 32.Ke2 Ra8 33.Ke3 Ra3 34.g4 Nc4+ 35.Ke2

35.Kf3 Ne5+ 36.fxe5 dxe5 37.Re4 Rxd3+ 38.Kg2 Rxd5.

35...Rxa2+ 36.Kf3 Ra3 37.Kg2 Ne3+ 0-1



[FEN "5k2/1p2pp2/3p2pp/3P4/1P1R1PP1/r2Bn3/5RKP/2r5 w - - 0 38"]

An excellent example of the possibilities of the Gurgenidze.

Lessons Learned

- Be aware of the key motifs: ...a5, ...Qb6, and ...a6, and ...b5. These moves crop up again and again, so you need to be looking for them.
- Know the development scheme: ...Be6, ...Qa5, ...Rfc8, ...a6, ...b5, and in particular the early ...Nxd4 to force White to recapture with the queen. You will use these moves in ninety-five percent of games in this system.
- Black is aiming to develop quickly and get rapid counterplay. If an opponent really knows their stuff, then you will probably reach the endgame we saw above. Practice it and know it. It is a complicated position and knowing its subtleties is more important than a +/- or =/+ evaluation.

Famous Practitioners

- Vladimir Malakhov is a modern proponent of this system. The Russian grandmaster was a nuclear physicist before he became a professional player.
- The late Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen played this opening for fifty years.
- The Serbian grandmaster Dragoljub Velimirovic also gave us the Verlimirovic Attack in the Schevenigen, which is a wild system.
- The Dutch grandmaster Sergei Tiviakov has been very successful at European team championships.
- The Bulgarian Super GM Veselin Topalov plays the Accelerated Dragon on occasion.

Further Reading

- [*Starting Out: The Accelerated Dragon*](#) by Andrew Greet. These starting out books are quite good. They go into enough depth and manage to keep your interest.

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Readers' Responses

Quentin from the **USA** - Good job, Abby! I always enjoy your articles. Keep up the good work.



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