



COLUMNISTS

*Over the
Horizons*

Stefan Bücker

Vulture's Wing Play
(Part 3)

My first two columns on **1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c3 Ne4!?** (the Vulture) presented several games, but also a lot of “pure” analysis, since practical examples of the main line **4 Qc2! Qa5+ 5 Nd2! Nf6!** were rare. Such an analysis can never be perfect. Even when you study a position for many hours, there will always be an important point that you have missed. Opinions from other players are needed, who contribute fresh ideas. Fortunately, several readers sent their comments. And I played the Vulture in two new games.

Let's begin where the [last article](#) ended, in the main line: **1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nf6 6 e4 d6 7 Ne2 e5 8 Nc3 Be7 9 Be2 Nbd7 10 a3 Qd8 11 b4 b6.**



James Vigus (Great Britain) suggests an improvement for White: “I like such positions for Black in principle and have happily played the manoeuvre ...Nf8-g6 in similar Old Benoni scenarios. But here I feel Black has conceded too many tempi, as the white knight on d2 is already half-way to the square it wants to be: e3. The sequence could be: **12 Nf1!** (much more constructive than Nf3) **Nf8 13 Ne3**

Ng6 14 h4!?. I haven't analysed 14 Nf5 or 14 g3 Bh3, but 14 h4 appears a safe way to deprive Black of all the counterplay (with ...Nh5, ...f5) he gets in your analysis. After playing g3, White has the potential lever with f4, and the possibility of opening lines on the queenside, while Black is just waiting passively – not much fun. The knight on e3 covers f5 and c4 and makes way for f4 in due course.”

This insider idea was more than welcome, because my own experience with traditional Old Benoni positions is rather limited. It is a healthy warning to see how a little change in White's set-up (Nf1-e3 instead of Nf3) stifles Black's counterplay. This is the sunny side of the new idea,

but avoiding **12 Nf3** also means that White loses his control over g5. In my main line the knight f3 had played an important role, preventing Black's standard manoeuvre ...Ne8, ...h6, ...Bg5 to exchange the bad bishop.

After **12 Nf1** Black therefore should return to the traditional scheme of play: **12...0-0** followed by ...Ne8 and ...Bg5, ...g6, ...Ng7. It might also be advantageous to keep the knight on d7 against the early b4. In certain situations the knight could take back on c5. Even ...cxb4 axb4 a5 might come into question. Altogether, I don't believe that the immediate **12 Nf1** is a refutation.

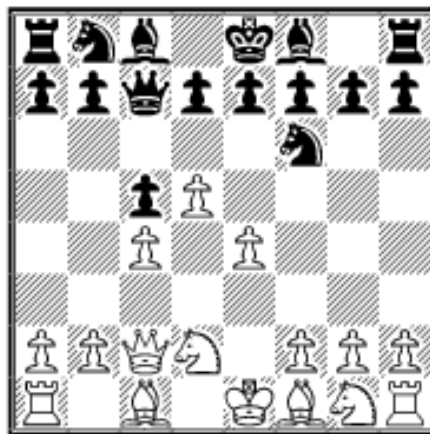


Zygmunt Nasiolkowski,
Lüdenscheid

However, perhaps White can find a more precise way to execute his plan. It would be interesting to see what happens, when White delays his decision of 12 Nf1. Then White could make his choice: against ...0-0, he would react by Nf3!, and if Black plays ...Nf8, his response is Nf1!. Black doesn't have many useful waiting moves, but White's choice also isn't easy. For example, against **12 Rb1** Black might have **12...cxb4 13 axb4 a5!?**. More food for thought.

J. van den Bersselaar (2211) – St. Bücker (2349)
Bad Wiessee 2005 (Open)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 Ne4 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nf6 6 e4 Qc7



Instead of 6...d6 or 6...e5, which I recommended in this column only weeks ago. Didn't I trust my own analysis? In practice things often look a bit different. For the theoretician it is logical to keep the queen as long as possible on a5, to reduce White's possibilities. At the board I suddenly liked the simpler text move. In fact, Black doesn't lose much by retreating immediately to c7, while on the other side the Qc7 prevents the immediate f2-f4, White's most aggressive set-up. There is nothing wrong with 6...d6 or 6...e5, but 6...Qc7 is also quiet and strong.

7 Ngf3

7 Qa4 pins the d7-pawn, but it takes Black only a few moves (...g6, ...Bg7, ...0-0) to solve the problem. Sooner or later the white queen has to retreat.

7...e5 8 Be2 d6 9 0-0

Or 9 Nf1 g6!?.

9...Nbd7 10 Ne1 Be7 11 Nd3 g5

Claiming that White has castled prematurely. The alternative was 11...0-0 12 f4 exf4 13 Rxf4 Ne8 14. Nf1!, which seems about equal.

12 Re1 Nf8 13 Bd1

He could play 13 Nf1! at once (13...Nxe4? 14 Nxe5!), attacking pawn g5. For example 13...h6 (or 13...Ng6!? 14 Bxg5 Nxd5) 14 Ng3 Ng6 =.

13...Ng6 14 Nf1 Nf4



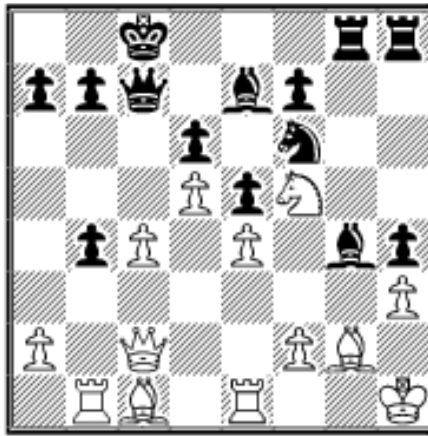
**15 Kh1! h5 16 Nxf4 gxf4 17 g3
fxg3 18 Nxg3 Bh3 19 Nf5 0-0-0 20
b4 Rdg8 21 Bf3 cxb4**

21...Bxf5 22 exf5 Ng4 was better,
for example 23 Rb1 cxb4 24 Rxb4
Qc5 25 Rb2 Bd8! =+.

22 Rb1 Bg4 23 Bg2 h4 24 h3?

Routine – and a serious mistake.

White overlooks the following sacrifice. Otherwise he wouldn't have hesitated to give his "strong" knight for my bad bishop: 24 Nxe7+! Qxe7 25 h3 Bd7 26 Rg1 Rg6 27 Be3 b6 28 Rxb4 Rhg8 =.



24...Bxf5 25 exf5 Rxc2! 26 Kxc2 Nxd5 27 Qd3 Nf6!

In time trouble I didn't spend much time on the alternative 27...Nc3 28 Rxb4 Qc6+ 29 f3 Nxa2. After the text move White has no defense against the simple threat Qc6.

28 Bd2 Rg8+ 29 Kf1 Qc6 30 Rxb4 Bd8?

30...Qg2+ 31 Ke2 Rg3 32 Rg1 Qxg1 33 fxg3 hxg3 -+.

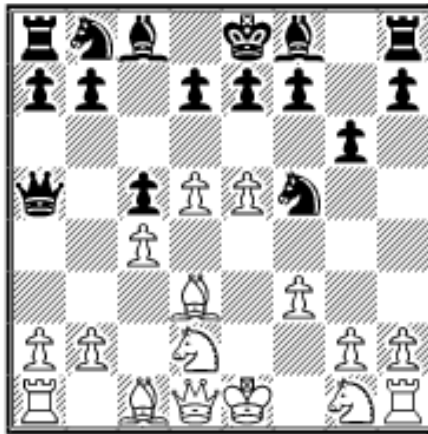
31 Reb1 Qg2+ 32 Ke1 Bb6

Or 32...Ne4 33 Rxb7 Qxf2+ 34 Kd1 Rg1+ 35 Kc2 Nc5 36 Qxd6 Qxf5+ -+.

33 Be3 Qf3 34 Rxb6 axb6 35 Qb3 Ne4, White resigns.

If the new line 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nd6! is as reliable as it looks, then the treatment from my [first column](#) deserves more attention. The following reactions can give you valuable hints.

Christian Köpke (Germany) questions my analysis after (1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4) **4 f3 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nd6 6 e4 g6 7 e5!? Nf5 8 Bd3**



He is right to say that 8...Bg7? (my move) doesn't lead to equality. After 9 Bxf5 gxf5 10 f4 (Köpke) Black has serious difficulties in completing his development. So instead 8...d6 should be the correct continuation.

Klaus Gawehns (Germany) draws my attention to the game Gawehns - Gallinnis, NRW-Liga 1990: **1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5**

Nc3 Nxc3 6 Bd2 e5 7 Bxc3 Qc7 8 f4 d6 9 Nf3 Nd7 10 e3 g6 (so far the line was given in the notes to the game Foisor – Ungureanu, which was in part 1 of this article) **11 h4 Bg7 12 h5 Nb6**



13 fxe5! (instead of 13...hxc6 in an older game Tatai - Bückner)

13...dxe5 14 0-0-0 Bg4 15 Rh4 (or 15 d6!?, for example 15...Qc6 16 Bxe5!? Bxe5 17 Nxe5 Bxd1 18 Qd3!? Qa4 19 hxc6, analysis by Gawehns) **15...gxh5 16 Bd3 Qd6 17 Bf5 f6 18 Bxg4 +/- (=, 63).**

Yes, this was an important game. I had to defend similar positions in my own practice and admit that it

certainly is a critical line. In my first column I wanted to avoid too many details and therefore recommended the short 9...exf4 10 Qe4+ Qe7 =. However, White can play 9 e3 first, and then we could easily reach the game above by a transposition of moves. So the game Gawehns – Gallinnis deserves our attention. As a possible improvement I suggest 16...Qe7 (instead of 16...Qd6) 17 Rdh1 Bf6, about equal. Klaus Gawehns replied that 18 Rxc5 Bxc5 19 Rxc5 e4! could be tried. This seems rather unclear. In any case 16...Qe7 offers Black better chances than in the original game.

It's unclear, by the way, whether the transposition of moves really leads to the critical variation. After **9 e3** (which doesn't threaten pawn e5) Black might himself postpone the move ...Nd7. In case of 9...g6 10 Nf3 Bg7 11 0-0-0 the continuation 11...Bf5!? seems playable, for example 12 e4 Bg4 13 Be2 Bxf3 14 Bxf3 Nd7 15 g3 0-0-0 16 Rhf1 Kb8 17 Be2 h5, intending ...h4, and Black can be satisfied with the situation.

If this variation works, my recommendation (in the first column) **9 f4 exf4 10 Qe4+ Qe7 11 Qxf4 Nd7** gains importance. Klaus Gawehns writes: "In this line White really has a tough nut to crack. But it is still debatable, whether Black has reached equality. I believe that White at first should play 12 0-0-0. Has Black anything better than 12...f6?" This last move looks reliable, and I wouldn't hesitate to use it in practice. On the other hand, I cannot exclude that White may have a small advantage, when he plays like a super-hero. For now, all we can say that there is still plenty to explore in the line 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nc3!?. Who knows? One day it may well become the new main line, when nobody trusts 5 Nd2 anymore.

The last game also demonstrates the dangers of the 5 Nc3 line. Hardly ever have I stood worse in my favorite opening.

Dr. G. Fahnenschmidt (2198) – St. Bückner (2349)

Bad Wiessee 2005 (Open)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 Ne4 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nc3 Nxc3 6 Bd2 e5 7 Bxc3

Qc7 8 g3 d6

After 8...g6 9 f4 Bg7 10 Bh3 0-0
 11 Qd2 Re8!? (11...d6) 12 Nf3 e4
 13 d6 Bxc3 14 bxc3 Qc6 15 Ne5 e3
 16 Qd5 Qxd5 17 cxd5 f6 18 Nd3 d6
 White seems to be slightly better.

9 Bh3

A strong move, which my opponent found over the board. Can Black allow the exchange of his strong bishop?

9...Bxh3

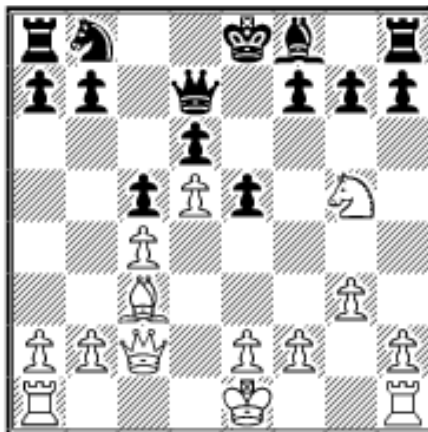
In I. Veneteanu (2245) – A.

Berescu (2392), Bucharest 1999,

Black preferred to keep the bishops on the board: 9...Nd7 10 e4 Be7 11 Ne2 0-0 12 0-0 Rb8 13 a4 b6 14 Kh1 Re8 15 Ng1 Bf6 16 b3 a6 17 Qd3 Qd8 18 Ra2 g6 draw. The attack 10 f4 seems more dangerous. White intends either f4-f5 or 11 fxe5, to establish a protected passed pawn at d5. There are no immediate threats, but Black's position is rather passive.

10 Nxh3 Qd7

10...Be7 11 f4 Nd7 could be an alternative, if Black is willing to accept a passed pawn at d5. Another option is 10...Qc8, which is similar to the text, but keeps the d7-square for the knight.

11 Ng5**11...h6?**

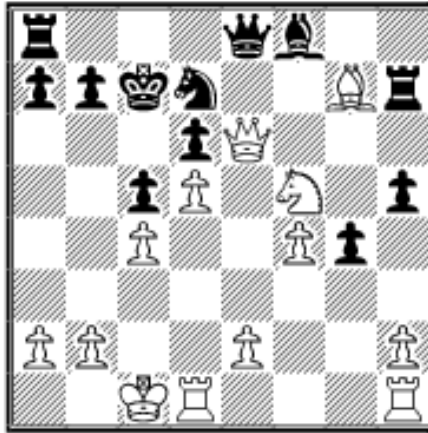
A mistake, which gives White a useful additional tempo. The critical line was 11...Be7! 12 h4 (12 f4 Bxg5, or 12 Ne4 f5) 12...h6 (12...Qg4? 13 Ne4 f5 14 f3! Qh5 15 Nf2 followed by g4) 13 Ne4 f5 14 Nd2 0-0 15 f4 e4, for example 16 g4 e3 17 Nf1 fxg4 or 16 e3 h5 with complications.

12 Ne4 f5 13 Nd2 Qf7 14 f4 e4 15 g4 e3 16 Nf1

A younger Dr. Gerhard
 Fahnen Schmidt (now aged 65)

During the game I also feared 16 Nf3 fxg4 17 Nh4. In both cases Black seems almost lost.

16...fxg4 17 Nxe3 h5? (17...Qxf4) 18 Qe4+ Kd8 19 0-0-0 Nd7 20 Nf5 Kc7 21 Qe6! Qe8 22 Bxg7 Rh7



23 Qg8??

Both 23 Bc3 and 23 Bxf8 Qxf8 24 e4 Re8 25 Qg6 should have won easily for White, who has an extra pawn and the better position.

23...Qg6 24 e4 Rxd7 (24...Re8! was even stronger) 25 Nxd7 Qxd7 26 Qe6 Nb6 27 e5 Nxc4 28 Rhe1 Rd8 29 Re4 Nb6 30 f5 dxe5 31 f6 Qg5+ 32 Kc2 Bd6 33 f7 g3 34 h4 Qg7 35 Rg1 Qh7 36 Kd3 c4+ 37 Ke3 Rf8 38 Rxd3 Bc5+ 39 Kd2 Qxe4 40 Rg6 Bb4+ 41 Kd1 Qe1+ 42 Kc2 Qd2+, White resigns.

Next month: something completely different.

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