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Asymmetry and More Chaos

Earlier columns, "Symmetry and Chaos" [1] and "The Roulade Game" [2], had discussed **Balogh's Defense**, one of my favorite weapons against the King's Pawn opening: **1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5**. It comes with an extra bonus for Dutch experts, by potentially avoiding certain Anti-Dutch specialties. Provided that you play a Dutch line where d7-d6 is part of Black's plan, the sequence **1 d4 d6** is a good way to vary from the immediate **1...f5**. In case of **2 c4 f5**, the risk of an unusual white variation will be greatly reduced, while after **2 e4** your opponent may expect a lot of things, but hardly **2...f5**.

However, in the second of these columns [2] attentive readers noticed a short sentence, halfway into the article on page four: "Improvements for Black are needed." Although well-hidden in this fine print, I couldn't deny that the following variation was a major threat for the whole defense: **1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bd3 Nc6 5 d5! Ne5 6 exf5 Nxd3+ 7 Qxd3 Qd7 8 Nge2!** (Ortwin Thal) **8...Qxf5 9 Qc4**. Here White is simply much better (+/-); for more details see [2].

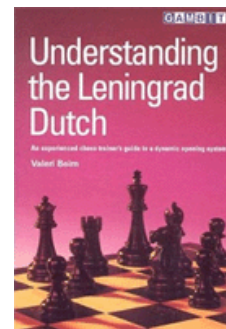


It took a while until I regained my sympathy for Balogh's Defense. The key idea, studied in *Kaissiber* 30 (2008) [4], was to change Black's move-order **1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bd3 fxe4! 5 Nxe4 Nc6!**



In order to avoid the unpleasant **4...Nc6 5 d5!** mentioned above, Black is willing to sacrifice the exchange: **6 Nxf6+ exf6 7 Qh5+ g6 8 Bxg6+ hxg6 9 Qxh8**. My article in *Kaissiber* 30 gave further analyses of the complications after **9...Qe7+ 10 Be3 Nb4!** (then a novelty), claiming that Black had sufficient compensation, but also warned that the quiet **7 c3!?** was a dangerous alternative.

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Michael Tcharotschkin

The *Kaissiber* article didn't cure all of Black's problems, but at least it had one positive effect (which also answers my rhetorical question in the last column, whether there is anybody who reads my articles): it inspired another German player, **Michael Tscharotschkin**, to start playing Balogh's Defense. He is the man behind a [website](#) that announces forthcoming tournaments. Not surprisingly, he is an active tournament player himself, with 103 resp. 82 games rated by FIDE in the last two years. I hasten to mention another detail from the FIDE data available on the Internet: Tscharotschkin's official FIDE score with the black pieces is 70 wins, 41 losses and only 32 draws.

No doubt, the Balogh Defence was a fitting acquisition for his repertoire. He has since played the system with success, in more than a dozen games. Michael Tscharotschkin was so kind not only to share these games with me, but even submitted detailed analyses in critical positions – in short, he did most of the hard work for the following part of the article. (Note: For the theoretical part below, MT stands for Michael Tscharotschkin, SB for Stefan Bucker.)

White Accepts the Sacrifice

J. Hernando Rodrigo (2377) – M. Tscharotschkin (2236)

Open Badalona (Spain), August 5, 2008

Balogh's Defense [A82]

1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bd3 fxe4 5 Nxe4 Nc6!? 6 Nxf6+

Calmer alternatives 6 c3 and 6 Nf3 are discussed in the second part of this article.

6...exf6 7 Qh5+

7 c3 was analyzed in *Kaissiber* 30 [4]. I gave the following analysis of the innocent looking, but dangerous developing move: 7...Be6 8 Ne2 d5 9 Nf4 Bf7 10 0-0 Qd7 11 Re1+ Be7



Black's position is passive, but solid. There might follow 12 Nh5 0-0 13 Qf3

(intending Bf5) 13...Be6 14 Nf4 Bf7 15 h4 Rfe8 16 h5 Bf8 17 Bd2 Rxe1+ 18 Rxe1 Ne7 19 Re3 Rd8 20 Bc2 b6 21 Re1 Re8 22 a4 c6 23 b4 g6 24 Bd3 Bg7 25 b5 (25 h6 Bf8 26 b5 Nc8 +=) 25...c5 26 dxc5 bxc5 +=.

7...g6 8 Bxg6+ hxg6 9 Qxh8 Qe7+



For the sacrificed exchange, Black enjoys a strong and lasting attack against White's king, while his own majesty often castles long and watches the battle from a safe distance.

10 Be3

My *Kaissiber* article [4] had a laconic "10 Kd1 Bf5, comp." for the alternatives. Once again this proves how different things can look in practice. At this point three of Tscharotschkin's opponents must have felt that Black came too prepared for these complications. So they decided to "opt out" in time by choosing one of the less probable replies:

(a) 10 Kd1 Bf5 11 Nf3 0-0-0 12 Re1 (12 Qh4 g5 13 Qg3 (13 Nxg5?? Re8!! – + FM Thomassen – Tscharotschkin, Benidorm 2008) 13...Qe4 14 Ne1 Nxd4 = + Navarro Lopez-Menchero – Tscharotschkin, Benidorm 2008) 12...Qf7 13 Bh6 Qc4 14 Re2 Nxd4 15 Nxd4 Qxd4+ 16 Ke1 =, analysis by Tscharotschkin.

(b) 10 Kf1 and now

(b1) 10...Be6 11 Nf3 Nxd4 12 Bh6 Bc4+ 13 Kg1 Ne2+ 14 Kf1 0-0-0 15 b3 Ba6 16 c4 d5 17 Rd1 Kovermann – Tscharotschkin, Schwäbisch Gmünd 2009.



Tscharotschkin: "Instead of 17...Re8, the game continuation, 17...Nc3! would have been much better: 18 Re1 dxc4, intending 19 Rxe7 cxb3+ 20 Kg1 Bxe7 21 Qxd8+ Kxd8 22 axb3 Ne2+ 23 Kf1 Ng3+ 24 Kg1 Nxb1 25 Kxb1 -/+".

(b2) 10...Nxd4 11 Bh6 Bd7 12 Qxf8+ (12 Bxf8?? would be a small inaccuracy, allowing a nice mate in five: 12...Bb5+ 13 c4 Bxc4+ 14 Ne2 Qxe2 + 15 Kg1 Qf1+ 16 Rxf1 Ne2 mate! - MT) 12...Qxf8 13 Bxf8 Bb5+ 14 Ke1 Nxc2+ 15 Kd2 Nxa1 16 Bh6 Bf1 (or perhaps 16...Kf7 17 Nf3 g5 18 h4 Rh8, SB) 17 Ne2 Bxe2 18 Re1 Kf7 19 Rxe2 g5 20 h4 Kg6 21 hxg5 fxg5 22 Re6+ Kf7 23 Re1 Kg6 =, Tscharotschkin.

10...Nb4!

10...Nxd4? 11 0-0-0! +/- Lundeby - Jansson, Oslo 2007.



11 Kd2

My article focused on this move, preferred by the software, and gave another idea short shrift: 11 0-0-0 Qe4! 12 Rd2 Qxg2 13 Bh6 Be6! =+ [4]. Michael Tscharotschkin agrees that Kd2 is the “normal” move, but as it often happens with human adversaries, two of them went astray:

(a) 11 0-0-0. MT: “Looks good at first sight, but it has a drawback:” 11... Qe4!. The next moves are forced: 12 Rd2 Qxg2 13 Bh6 Be6 14 Qxf8+ Kd7 15 Qg7+ (the rook is taboo: 15 Qxa8?? Nxa2+ 16 Kb1 Qf1+ 17 Rd1 Qxd1+ 18 Bc1 Qxc1 mate, MT) 15...Kc6



(a1) 16 b3 Qxh1 17 Qxg6 Rg8 18 Bg7 Qxh2 19 c3 (19 Qxf6?? Qxg1+ 20 Kb2 -+ Walton – Tscharotschkin, Calvia 2008) 19...Nd5 20 c4 Nf4 21 d5+ Kb6 22 Qg3 Qxg3 23 fxg3 Rxg7 24 dxe6 Nxe6 -/+, analysis by Tscharotschkin.

(a2) 16 d5+ “is the best move, but hard to find!” (MT) 16...Bxd5 17 b3 Qxh1 18 Qxf6. The resulting situation seems critical for the assessment of 11 0-0-0. A possible continuation is 18...Qxg1+ 19 Kb2 b6 20 Qc3+ Kb7 21 Qxb4 =+, Tscharotschkin.

(b) 11 c3 Nc2+ 12 Kd2 Nxa1 13 Bh6 Be6 14 Qxf8+ Qxf8 15 Bxf8 Kxf8 16 Nf3 Nb3+ 17 axb3 Bxb3 = Cabello Rodriguez – Tscharotschkin, Malaga 2008.

11...Bf5 12 g4!?

So far the players had followed my article [4]. The advance of the g-pawn is an interesting novelty. After 12 Rc1, there might follow



(a) 12...Nxa2 (“!” in my 2008 *Kaissiber* article [4]) 13 Re1 Qf7 14 Bg5+ Kd7 15 Qxf6 Qc4 16 Re3 Qxc2+ 17 Ke1 d5 18 f3 Qxg2 (in [4] I gave 18...Bd6 19 Re2 Qb1+ 20 Kf2 Nc1 21 Bxc1 Qxc1 22 g4 Be4 23 Qf7+ Kc6 24 fxe4 Rf8 25 Nf3 Qxh1 26 exd5+ Kb5 27 Qxf8 Bxf8 28 Re1 Qxe1+ 29 Kxe1 Kc4 =) 19 Re7+ Bxe7 20 Qxe7+ Kc6 21 Qc5+ Kd7 =, analysis by Tscharotschkin.

(b) However, in the diagrammed position, Michael Tscharotschkin isn’t satisfied with mere equality! MT: “I prefer 12...0-0-0!?, because here Black can still fight for a win!”

(b1) 13 a3 Na2 14 Rd1 Qe4 15 Ne2 Qxc2+ 16 Ke1 Re8 17 Qxf6 Bg4 18 f3 Bd7 19 Qf4 (19 Kf2 Bh6 20 Bxh6 Rxe2+ 21 Kg3 Rxc2+ 22 Kf4 b6 →, MT) 19...Bb5 20 Rd2 Qb1+ 21 Rd1 Qxb2 22 Rd2 Qb1+ 23 Kf2 Qxh1 24 Rxa2 Qb1 25 Rd2 (25 Qf7 Qd3 →, MT) 25...d5 26 a4 Bd6 27 Qf7 Bxa4 28 Qxd5 (28 Nc3 Qb3 →, MT) 28...Bb5 →, analysis by Tscharotschkin.

(b2) Maybe 13 Ne2 (which MT also mentions, without analysis) is stronger. Then 13...Nxa2 14 Ng3 Nxc1 15 Nxf5 Nb3+!? can lead to an amusing voyage of White’s king: 16 Kc3!? (16 cxb3, about =) 16...gxf5 17 Kxb3 (the point: White avoids a weakness in his pawn chain) 17...Qe6+ 18 Kc3! (he has to return: 18 Ka3? Qc4! -/+) with roughly equal chances. There is an even more aggressive continuation, namely 13...Qf7 (instead of 13...Nxa2) 14 Ng3 Bd7.



By adding another pawn to his original sacrifice of an exchange, Black achieves excellent play and full compensation: 15 a3 Bg7 16 Qh4 Rh8 17 Qf4 Nd5 18 Qf3 Bc6 19 Qe2 f5 20 c4 Nb6 (or 20...Nf6) 21 d5 Ba4 22 Qd3 Bxb2 23 Rb1 Bg7, with an unclear situation.

12...Be4

Tscharotschkin’s comment “12...Bxc2? 13 Re1” seemed cryptic, but after some pondering the software produced an explanation: 12...Bxc2 13 Re1 Be4 14 f3 0-0-0 15 Bh6 d5 16 Bxf8 Rxf8 17 Qh3 Nd3 18 fxe4 Nxe1 19 Ne2!! Qb4 + 20 Kd1 dxe4 21 Rxe1 Qxb2 22 Nc3 Qa1+ 23 Ke2 Qb2+ 24 Kf1 f5 25 Qh6 +=.

13 f3 0-0-0! 14 Qh3

14 Bh6 Nxc2 15 Bxf8 Rxf8 16 Qh6, Tscharotschkin. Or 14 fxe4 Qxe4 15 Rc1 =+, SB.



14...Nxc2?

A serious mistake. Correct was 14...Bxc2! 15 a3 Nd5 16 Kxc2 (16 Re1?! Ba4 17 Bh6 Qd7 18 g5 f5 19 Qf1 Bb5 20 Qf2 Bc4 21 Nh3 Qa4 22 Kc1 Bd3 23 Qd2 Qc6+ 24 Kd1 Qa4+ 25 Kc1 Nb4 26 Qd1 Na2+ 27 Kd2 Qxd4 28 Nf4 Bb5 + 29 Kc2 Qxf4 →, MT) 16...Nxe3+, Black has a winning position: 17 Kb1 Nc4 18 Ka2 Qe6 19 Rd1 Ne3+ 20 d5 Nxd5 21 Ka1 Ne3 22 Rc1 Qb3 23 Rc3 Qd1+ 24 Ka2 Nd5 25 Rb3 Re8 26 g5+ f5 27 Qh8 a5 →, analysis by Tscharotschkin.

At this point our main game **Hernando Rodrigo – Tscharotschkin**, Badalona 2008, loses its theoretical value. We give the rest in short (comments by SB):

15 fxe4 Nxa1 16 Ne2? (16 g5+! f5 17 exf5? Qe4 →, but instead 17 Ne2! Nc2 18 exf5 Qd7 19 Kxc2! is strong) **16...Nc2 17 Nc3 Nxe3 18 Qxe3 c6 19 d5 c5 20 h4 Bg7 21 h5 Rh8 22 Kc2** (better 22 Qf3!, to prevent the freeing move f6-f5) **22...f5! = 23 gxf5 Bxc3 24 bxc3 gxf5 25 Kd3 Re8?** (25...Qe5! 26 h6 b5 with a strong attack) **26 e5 dxe5 27 Kc4 Kb8** (27...Qd7!) **28 h6 Qd7! →**



29 h7 Qa4+? (29...b5+! 30 Kxc5 Rc8+ 31 Kb4 Qd6+ 32 Kxb5 Qxd5+ wins the rook on h1) **30 Kd3 e4+ 31 Ke2 Qxa2+ 32 Kf1** (32 Qd2 =) **32...Qa6+?** (32...Qb1+ 33 Kg2 Qc2+ with an equal game) **33 Kg2?** (33 Kf2 Qa2+ 34 Kg3!, White has winning chances) **33...Qg6+ 34 Qg3+ Qxg3+ 35 Kxg3 Rh8 36 Kf4 b5 37 Kxf5 e3 38 c4 e2 39 Kg6 bxc4 40 Re1 Kc7 41 Rxe2 Kd6 42 Rd2 1/2- 1/2**

White Declines the Sacrifice

1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bd3 fxe4 5 Nxe4 Nc6 6 Be3



(a) 6 c3 e5 (here the analysis in [4] ended, SB) 7 Bg5 Be7 8 Bxf6 (8 Nxf6+ Bxf6 9 Qh5+ Kf8 and now either 10 Bxf6 Qxf6 = or 10 Nf3 exd4 11 Bxf6 Qxf6 12 0-0 dxc3 13 bxc3 g6 14 Qh6+ Qg7, and now White gambits a pawn, but the position is equal) 8...Bxf6 9 d5 (9 dxe5 Nxe5 10 Bb5+ Bd7 11 Qh5+ g6 12 Bxd7+ Nxd7 13 Qd5 Qe7 14 0-0-0 (or 14 Qxb7 Rb8 15 Qd5 Bxc3+ 16 bxc3 Nf6 17 Qc6+ Kf8 18 f3 Rb6 19 Qa4 d5 20 Nh3 dxe4 21 fxe4 Qxe4+ 22 Qxe4 Nxe4 23 0-0+ Kg7 =) 14...0-0-0 =) 9...Nb8 (better than 9...Ne7 10 Qh5+ Kf8 11 Nxf6 gxf6 12 Qf3 +=) 10 Nf3 0-0 11 0-0 Nd7 12 Qc2 Qe7 =, analysis by Tscharotschkin.

(b) 6 Ne2 e5 7 c3 Nxe4 8 Bxe4 d5 9 Bc2 Bd6 10 0-0 0-0 11 dxe5 Bxe5 12 f4 Bf6 +=, Tscharotschkin.

6...g6

6...Nb4!? came into consideration: 7 Ne2 Nxd3+ 8 Qxd3 Nxe4 9 Qxe4 Qd7 10 d5 Qg4!; e.g., 11 Nf4 g5 12 f3 Qf5 13 Nh5 Qxe4 14 fxe4 Bg4 15 Bd4 Rg8 16 Ng3 Bg7 17 Bxg7 Rg7 18 Kd2 e5 and Black is only slightly worse.

7 h4

7 Nxf6+ exf6 8 Ne2 d5 9 c3 += (cf. the first game, note 7 c3).

7...Nxe4 8 Bxe4 d5 9 Bf3 Be6 10 Ne2 Bg7 11 Qd2

Maybe 11 Nf4!? was more promising.

11...Qd7 12 b4 a5 (or 12...Bg4 =) 13 b5 Nd8 14 Rb1



Both sides suffer from serious weaknesses, so it seems only fair to say that the chances are balanced. The software suggests 14...Bg4 15 Bxg4 Qxg4 16 Kf1 Nf7, about equal (SB).

One game continued, not worse, but differently: **14...Nf7 15 c4 c6 16 bxc6 bxc6 17 c5** (17 cxd5 Bxd5 18 Bxd5 cxd5 19 Qd3 0-0 20 h5 g5 21 0-0 Qg4!, unclear; SB) **17...Bf5 18 Rb6 e5 19 Nc3 0-0 20 0-0** (1-0, 32) **R. Pabalan – M. Tscharotschkin**, Dubai Open 2009. Black could have secured a small advantage by 20...Rae8 +=.

Reviving the Old Main Line

1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bd3 fxe4 5 Nxe4 Nc6

Let's assume for a moment that the exchange sacrifice (6 Nxf6+ exf6 7 Qh5+ etc.) is correct, and that the positional 7 c3 isn't a big threat to the soundness of Black's move-order either. What else could White try?

6 Nf3

Of course. Even if Black's move-order-enterprise to avoid 4...Nc6 5 d5 is successful, we should never forget that there still remains the main line, which the text move reaches by a transposition of moves. True, this was what Black had intended, but if we look back to my two columns [1] and [2], Black ended a bit too often in very, to put it mildly, "adventurous positions":

6...Bg4 7 h3 Bh5 8 Ng3 Bxf3 9 Qxf3

But fortunately Michael Tscharotschkin proposes something different even in this case:

9...d5!?



Tscharotschkin: "I like this move more than the dangerous 9...Nxd4 10. Qxb7, when White seems to have a good position." Okay, I am not infallible. But even if I'd admit for a second that the positions after 9...Nxd4 are a bit risky for Black, we still have a small conflict, since I had claimed in [1] that "None of the alternatives is playable: (a) 9...d5 10 c3 g6 11 Bg5 Bg7 12 0-0-0 Qd7 13 h4 etc." Who is right?

10 c3

In an unpublished analysis [3], Dr. Ortwin Thal, my conqueror in the correspondence game studied in [2], continues 10 Bb5 Qd7 11 Bg5 a6 12 Bxc6 Qxc6 13 0-0-0 0-0-0 14 Rhe1 Qa4 15 Kb1 +/- (O. Thal). I'd prefer a more chaotic approach: 11...Qe6+!?



(a) 12 Kd1 Ne4! 13 Nxe4 dxe4 14 Qg4 Qd5 15 Bxc6+ bxc6 16 Re1 Qxd4+ 17 Kc1 Qxf2 18 Qxe4 0-0-0 19 a4 g6 20 Kb1 Qc5 21 h4 h6 22 Be3 Qd5 23 Qg4 + e6 24 Bxa7 h5! (Black wishes to play Bb4, but the square is still watched by the queen) 25 Qh3 Kb7 26 Bg1 Bb4! 27 c3 Bd6 with an unclear position.

(b) 12 Kf1 0-0-0 (now 12...Ne4? 13 Nxe4 dxe4 14 Qg4 is premature) 13 Re1 Ne4! (or perhaps 13...Qd7 14 Qc3 h6! 15 Bf4 e6) 14 Nxe4 dxe4 15 Qxe4 Nxd4 16 Qxe6+ Nxe6 17 Bc1 (17 Rxe6 Rd1+ 18 Re1 Rd5) 17...Rd6 18 g3

g6; for example, 19 Kg2 Bg7 20 Bc4 Kd7 21 Re4 Nc5 22 Re2 Bf6 +=.

10...e5

Tscharotschkin's improvement upon my analysis in [1]. I checked my old files to find out what I had missed.

11 Qe2 Qe7 12 Nf5

12 dxe5 Nxe5 13 Bc2 Nc4 14 Qxe7+ Bxe7 15 Nf5 Kf7 +=, Tscharotschkin.

12...Qe6 13 dxe5 Qxe5 14 Be3 g6!

Here my old analysis went 14...0-0-0, which in fact seems to be weaker.



15 Nh4

He can also try 15 f4 Qe6 16 Nd4 Nxd4 17 Bxd4 Qxe2+ 18 Kxe2 Bg7 19 Rhe1 0-0 +=, SB.

15...Bg7 16 Nf3 Qe7 17 0-0-0 0-0-0 +=

So far Michael Tscharotschkin's analysis. His assessment seems correct.

I'd still say that 9...Nxd4 offers attractive chances for Black as well, since there are many traps waiting for White (for more details see [1] and [2]). But the alternative 9...d5 is more solid, apparently it is in fact objectively the better move. Almost certainly it is the one line that is easier for Black to learn and handle in OTB play.

Don't expect a quiet afternoon when you play Balogh's Defense. Your pawn structures will be asymmetrical, now and then a white knight will land on the square e6, upon which you better have a good reply at hand. But there are many lines that will score heavily for Black, first and foremost the exchange sacrifice. A defense that generates chaos on the board cannot be much worse for the second player.

Sources:

- [1] S. B cker: "[Symmetry and Chaos: Balogh's Defense](#)," [ChessCafe.com](#), September 2006.
- [2] S. B cker: "[The Roulade Game](#)," [ChessCafe.com](#), January 2007.
- [3] O. Thal: Unpublished Analyses, 2005-2007, which I partly used for [2].
- [4] S. B cker: "Vertrautes Chaos," in [Kaissiber 30](#) (2008).

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