



## COLUMNISTS

### Over the Horizons

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## The Paulsen Attack

The little experiment to suggest an offbeat 1 e4 repertoire goes into round two. You may remember that Alapin's Opening, sub-section: Scotch Game, was my general advice against 1...e5. Now I owe you a fitting suggestion against another main line of the Scotch Game, sometimes seen as *the* main line, the development of the bishop to c5: **1 e4 e5 2 Ne2 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Bc5** (the first part covered 4...Nf6) **5 Be3 Qf6 6 c3 Nge7**



[FEN "r1b1k2r/ppppnppp/2n2q2/2b5/3NP3/2P1B3/PP3PPP/RN1QKB1R w KQkq - 0 7"]

White to play – and find the best move for the repertoire. Before I give the solution, perhaps you should try to find it yourself. How do you prepare a continuation for your next tournament game? Is there a personal strategy that you have developed? Let me guess:

**First step** – You look into your database, where you find:

- 7 Bc4 – 5,200 games, score 54% for White, average rating (White) in rated games 2160
- 7 Nc2 – 540 games, score 46%, average rating: 2090
- 7 Qd2 – 280 games, score 49%, average rating: 2090
- 7 f4 – 108 games, score 48%, average rating: 1930
- 7 Be2 – 640 games, score 42%, average rating: 1810
- 7 Bb5 – 210 games, score 50%, average rating: 1760

**Second step** – You look into a recent opening book. It informs you that the 1922 Handbuch had assessed **7 Bc4 Ne5 8 Be2 Qg6 9 0-0 d5** as preferable for Black (p. 547, fn. 29), but thanks to Garry Kasparov and Sergey Dolmatov, who found the strong resource **10 Bh5!**, the Scotch Game was successfully reanimated.

**Conclusion** – You decide to play 7 Bc4, like everybody else on this planet.

There are many reasons why your decision is wrong. You'll have to learn much theory, and for little reward, because your opponents will expect 7 Bc4. Since the golden days of Garry Kasparov enough resources for Black have been found. To score heavily with 7 Bc4, you are simply a few decades late. What you really need is an idea that is unpopular yet strong.

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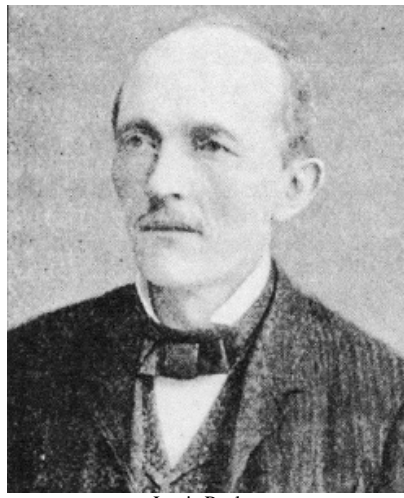
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Louis Paulsen

Source: G. A. Macdonnell:  
*The Knights and Kings of Chess*, 1894.

This may seem like an impossible mission. Actually it is easy. Nowadays nothing is more unpopular than former mainlines that have fallen into disgrace. These files are closed, the books explain why the line isn't played any more. Take, for example, the mainline of the 1880s, Louis Paulsen's **7 Bb5**. We open the 1922 Bilguer and what do we see? The interesting fact that 7 Bc4 wasn't the main line for Carl Schlechter, but 7 Bb5. Not too bad for a harmless sideline of today, to stay more than forty years at the top.



[FEN "r1b1k2r/ppppnppp/2n2q2/1Bb5/3NP3/2P1B3/PP3PPP/RN1QK2R b KQkq - 0 7"]

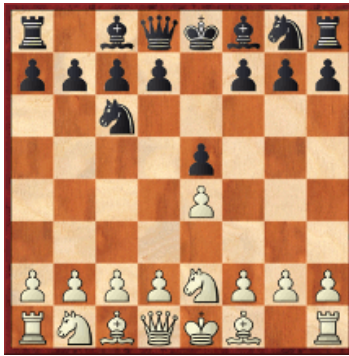
Perhaps you are beginning to see the advantage of a little historical research, instead of mindlessly following the crowd. Provided that you can repair 7 Bb5, you'd gain a secret weapon that an opponent can easily underestimate. Even better: the old sources from the nineteenth century, long forgotten and unavailable for most opponents, would become your private gold mine.

You are probably sceptical whether analyses from the nineteenth century are still useful. In my opinion, they are. There are errors, of course, but often just the kind of errors that can happen to your human opponents. The old articles often inspire new ideas, which in my opinion counts for more than just imitating recent successes of other players, no matter how strong they are. Spotting mistakes overlooked for 150 years, with the help of your computer, is part of the fun. Regarding the extent of old sources, you may be surprised how much is available, at least about fashionable lines of the past. Lev Gutman's reference work [5] on the Scotch has one page on 7 Bb5. The old analyses [1], [2], [3] used for this article are a total of about twelve pages, and the authors C. E. Ranken, W. Timbrell Pierce and William Steinitz deserve to be taken seriously. More can be found in old books and magazines, should 7 Bb5 ever become popular again.

By sheer coincidence, **7 Bb5** was tested in the second match game of the two experienced players, whose names are already known to the readers of this column.

**Attakinsky – Defendarov**

1 e4 e5 2 Ne2 Nc6



[FEN "r1bqkbnr/pppp1ppp/2n5/4p3/4P3/8/PPPPNPPP/RNBQKB1R w KQkq - 0 3"]

This move order avoids the Russian Defense. Last month I had studied only 2...Nf6 3 d4 Nxe4, but *Kaissiber* co-editor **Maurits Wind** (Netherlands) is right to mention 3...exd4 as a good alternative. Probably White cannot prove much of an advantage, but I propose the response 4 e5 Ne4 5 f3 (the gambit 5 c3?! Dxc3 6 Nbxc3 Bb4 seems too risky) 5...Nc5 6 Nxd4 (6 c3 looks unsound) 6...Nc6 (6...d6 7 exd6 Bxd6 8 Nb5!?) 7 Be3!. The last move offers a lively gambit; for example, 7...Qh4+ (7...Nxe5 8 f4 followed by Nc3 gives White sufficient compensation) 8 Bf2 Qg5 9 Nc3 with interesting complications. If 9...Qxe5+ 10 Be2 Nxd4 11 Bxd4 Qg5 12 f4!, White has sufficient compensation, at least.



[FEN "r1b1kb1r/pppp1ppp/8/2n3q1/3B1P2/2N5/PPP1B1PP/R2QK2R b KQkq - 0 12"]

As I said in the first part, I do not claim an advantage for White after Alapin's 2 Ne2, but the play seems unbalanced and offers many opportunities. The 2 Ne2 sequence can be a good decision, if you want to reach the Scotch, without having to spend a lot of work on the Russian or Philidor's Defense. You can easily upgrade this basic repertoire at a later moment, when you feel fit to play 2 Nf3.

3 d4 exd4

Accepting the invitation to the Scotch.

4 Nxd4 Bc5



[FEN "r1bqk1nr/pppp1ppp/2n5/2b5/3NP3/8/PPP2PPP/RNBQKB1R w KQkq - 0 5"]

The July column had proposed a (slightly) offbeat treatment of 4...Nf6. The bishop move is even more popular. Another option for Black, 4...Qh4, creates positions that anyone inclined to unusual situations should enjoy anyway. White should be warned, however, that 4...Qh4 isn't the bad move that some sources suggest. The jury is still out.

### 5 Be3 Qf6 6 c3 Nge7

One of the best-known positions of the Scotch Game. The "modern continuation" 7 Bc4 is also the oldest: two games Perigal – Walker are published in Walker's *Chess Studies*. Gutman's book [5] discusses ten continuations. Louis Paulsen introduced one of the minor ideas, 7 Be2, in 1864, and 7 Bb5 is named "Paulsen Attack" after him. Cook's *The Evolution of the Chess Openings*, 1906, writes: "This is one of the strongest continuations, first played in an unimportant game in 1866, but introduced into master play by L. Paulsen v. Anderssen at the Leipzig Tourney (1877)." If this wasn't enough, Paulsen introduced a third option for White, 7 Qd2, in the game L. Paulsen – Englisch, 1880.

### 7 Bb5!?



[FEN "r1b1k2r/ppppnppp/2n2q2/1Bb5/3NP3/2P1B3/PP3PPP/RN1QK2R b KQkq - 0 7"]

"The move [...] is, we believe, the strongest at this juncture," Steinitz in [2].

### 7...0-0

The most important alternatives are as follows:

(a) 7...Nd8 8 0-0 0-0 Gunsberg – Blackburne, London 1881, is good for White. Ranken [1] mentions that in a "subsequent partie" 9 Nd2 was played, and this seems in fact more flexible: +/- . An alternative line: 8...Qb6 9 Qe2 0-0 10 b4 Bxd4 11 cxd4 "with an excellent attack," Steinitz [2]. Yes, and Rybka's 9 Bc4 isn't bad either.

(b) Against 7...Qe5, Gutman recommends 8 Qd3!. It was analyzed in more detail 1882 by Ranken [1]: 8...d6 9 Nd2 0-0 10 f4 Qh5 11 0-0 f5 "even game." The last move fails to 11 Nxf5 +/-, but if we replace it by 11...Bd7 +=, the analysis comes close to the truth. I have tried 8...0-0 9 Nd2 a6 10 Bc4 d6 (10...d5? 11 exd5 Nxd5 12 N4f3) 11 0-0 Qh5 12 f4 Na5; White's advantage is small.

(c) One little detail that I simply have to add. Recent books on the Scotch rarely fail to mention that the early exchange of the white queen on f3 is an excellent, modern idea, which apparently has *revived* the Scotch Opening, or something like that. Here comes a variation from W. T. Pierce, 1892 [3]: 7... d6 8 Qf3



[FEN "r1b1k2r/ppp1nppp/2np1q2/1Bb5/3NP3/2P1BQ2/PP3PPP/RN2K2R b KQkq - 0 8"]

His four variations indicate that he likes White's position. So what is so special in Qd1-f3 that theoreticians of the nineteenth century should not be able to see it?

(d) 7...Bxd4?! 8 cxd4 Qg6 9 0-0 d5 (9...Qxe4 10 Nc3 is too risky, as Pierce [3] found out) happened in Blackburne – Winawer, Berlin 1881 (continued 10 Nc3). 10 exd5! Nxd5 11 Qf3 (so far in [2], [5])) 11...Be6 12 Nc3 and according to Pierce [3] White is better; 11 Nc3 may be slightly more precise.

(e) 7...Ne5, "given by Mr. Barnes in his notes to a game in the August number of *Brentano's Chess Monthly* as the best, seems to us inferior to any we have yet examined," C. E. Ranken 1882 [1]. The variation is similar to the next, newer example.

(f) 7...a6 is a natural and popular continuation, fifty-five games in my database (score: 50%). 8 Ba4 Ne5 (8...b5?! 9 Bc2 +/- Mieses – Blackburne, Hastings 1895; 8...Bb6!?) 9 Qe2 N7g6 10 Nd2 Nf4 11 Bxf4 Qxf4 12 g3 Qg4, Randviir – Keres, Pärnu 1947. Instead of 13 Qxg4, as in this game, White should prefer 13 f3 Qh3 14 f4 Nc6 15 N4f3 h6 16 0-0-0 +=. The position after 8 Ba4 is about even and should be studied carefully.

## 8 0-0 Bb6

(a) Similar to the last note, Black can play: 8...a6 9 Ba4 b5?! 10 Bc2 Bxd4 11 cxd4 d5 12 Nc3 +/- was given by Pierce as an improvement upon 12 e5, L. Paulsen – Fritz, Berlin 1880. White has indeed a strong attack: 12...dxe4 13 d5 Ne5 14 Nxe4 Qg6 15 Bg5 Nf5 16 Bf4, and Black is in trouble.

(b) 8...Bxd4 9 cxd4 d5 "= Keres," says *ECO* 1997 (third ed. Vol. C). Just as in the first and second edition, by the way. But the software suggests 10 f3! +/- with a dynamic position. We already have a fresh example in our database: Walbrodt – Gunsberg, Hastings 1895.

The text move is a prophylactic continuation, which was criticized by Pierce [3]. However, it directly prepares the later advance d7-d5. This advance would be most effective, when White has already played f2-f4. Therefore, the bishop move is more aggressive than 8...d6 ("=" in *Nunn's Chess Openings*, London 1999). It has been this strong continuation, I believe, which has led to the decline of 7 Bb5.

## 9 a4!?





[FEN "r1b2rk1/ppppnppp/1bn2q2/1B6/P2NP3/2P1B3/1P3PPP/RN1Q1RK1 b - a3 0 9"]

A new idea, perhaps an improvement. The main line used to be 9 f4 d5 (more critical than 9...d6 from the stem game L. Paulsen – Anderssen,Leipzig 1877) 10 e5 (Pierce 1892 [3] stops here, assessing it as good for White) 10...Qh6 11 Qd2 Nxd4 12 cxd4 Nf5 13 Nc3 c6 14 Be2 Nxe3 15 Qxe3 f6 16 Na4 Bc7 and White won in Suesman – Horowitz. New York 1946. Instead of 16...Bc7, Black has the stronger 16...fxe5 17 Nxb6 axb6 18 dxe5 Ra4! =+.

By moving his a-pawn and postponing f2-f4, White assails the bishop on b6 and makes it more difficult for Black to "read" the position. He denies him the information whether his plan involves f2-f4 or not. It is tempting for Black to try and refute the text move, by playing d7-d5, as in this game. But White is well prepared for this battle and in many cases the extra move a4 is useful, particularly if Black's c-pawns are doubled after an exchange on c6.

### 9...d5

An ambitious, but risky continuation. 9...a5? would be a positional error. The direct exchange on d4 isn't impressive either: 9...Bxd4 10 cxd4 d5 11 Nc3!? (or perhaps 11 f3) 11...dxe4 (11...a6 12. e5! Qg6 13 Be2 +=) 12 d5 a6 (12...Ne5? 13 Nxe4 Qg6 14 Bc5; 12...Rd8? 13 Qc1!) 13 dxc6! axb5 14 cxb7 Bxb7 15 axb5 Rxa1 16 Qxa1 Ra8 17 Qd1 +=.

The main alternative is 9...d6(!). It would be tempting to react with 10 f4, but even a delayed d6-d5 is not completely harmless; or Black may prepare the advance by means of Be6 or Rd8. More annoying is that Black can simplify: 10...Nxd4 11 Bxd4 Bxd4+ 12 Qxd4 Qxd4+ 13 cxd4 c6 14 Be2 d5 =. Therefore, subtler replies to 9...d6 should be tested:

(a) 10 Kh1, 10 Bc4 (directed against d6-d5), or 10 Re1 come into consideration.

(b) I'd recommend 10 Qd2, a set-up similar to Paulsen's second favourite, 7 Qd2.



[FEN "r1b2rk1/ppp1nppp/1bnp1q2/1B6/P2NP3/2P1B3/1P1Q1PPP/RN3RK1 b - - 0 10"]

The situation is complex. It wouldn't hurt to know more about the 7 Qd2 line, or to study Meitner's 7 Nc2. The move a2-a4 is often useful: 10...Qe5?! 11 Bf4 Qxe4? 12 Re1 Qg6 13 Bxc6 Nxc6 14 Nxc6 bxc6 15 a5 +/- . Black should adopt a strategy aiming at d7-d5; for example, 10...h6 followed by Rd8, or perhaps 10...Qg6; e.g., 11 f3 d5 12 Bd3 dxe4 13 Bxe4 Nf5, which the

computer regards as roughly equal, even after the astonishing 14 g4!?. New and good ideas are still needed in this variation, for both sides.

### 10 Bxc6 bxc6 11 a5 Bc5

The only alternative is to take on d4. It brings about a situation with bishops on squares of opposite color, but other factors in the position, like Black's weak a-pawn, may be more significant: 11...Bxd4 12 Bxd4 Qg6 13 f3! (to restrict Black's minor pieces)



[FEN "r1b2rk1/p1p1nppp/2p3q1/P2p4/3BP3/2P2P2/1P4PP/RN1Q1RK1 b - - 0 13"]

A possible continuation is 13...dxe4 14 fxe4 Ba6 15 Re1 Rfd8 16 Nd2 c5 (sacrifices a pawn, to free the suppressed knight) 17 Bxc5 Nc6 18 b4 Rd7 19 Qc2 Ne5 +=. Now Black's pieces are quite active, but White still seems to have an advantage; e.g., 20 Bd4 Qg5 21 h4 Qh6 22 Nb3 Nd3 23 Red1 Nf4 24 Qf2 Rd6 25 Rf1.

### 12 Nd2 Bd6

12...Qg6 13 Ne6!? Bxe6 14 Bxc5 Rfe8 15 f3 is similar to the last comment.

### 13 f4 Qh6 14 b4

14 Qf3 or 14 Qe2 also come into consideration. The text move aims at a blockade on the dark squares, a serious positional threat. And it offers a pawn sacrifice.

### 14...f5?!

Too ambitious. Black could be satisfied with 14...dxe4 15 Nxe4 Nd5 16 Bd2 and hope that his damaged pawn structure on the queenside may not be fatal. For example, 16...Re8 17 Qf3 Bd7 18 Rfe1 Rad8 19 Nxd6 Qxd6 20 Nb3 +=.

### 15 e5! Bxe5 16 Re1



[FEN "r1b2rk1/p1p1n1pp/2p4q/P2pbp2/1P1N1P2/2P1B3/3N2PP/R2QR1K1 b - - 0 16"]

The point of White's last move: for the price of a pawn, he has established a firm grip on the dark central squares and along the e-file. To exchange the bishop e5 now would not be an improvement: 16...Bxd4 17 Bxd4 Ng6 18 g3. We all know the rule that when a king is under fire, bishops of opposite color

are no drawing factor, they increase the attacker's chances. Who will doubt that in our case the menacing Bd4 is stronger than the Bc8?

### 15...Bd6 17 N2f3 Bd7

The freeing 17...c5 looks good at first sight, but it fails to 18 Nb5; e.g., 18... cxb4 19 Nxd6 Qxd6 (or 19...cxd6? 20 Bf2 Be6 21 Ng5 +-) 20 cxb4 Qxb4? 21 Rc1 followed by 22 Bc5 +-.

### 18 g3

White can choose from several promising plans. A possible alternative is 18 Nb3 Ng6 19 Nc5 Be8 20 g3 Qh5 21 Bd4 Bf7 22 a6.

### 18...Kh8

In a difficult situation, Black is lacking a good plan. To clear the square g8 for a later Ne7-g8-f6-e4 could be useful.

### 19 Ne5 Be8

If 19...Bxe5 20 fxe5 Qg6 21 e6 Bc8 22 Bf4, White wins the pawn c7, in a great position.

### 20 a6!

Underlining White's intentions: the pawn a7 is designed to fall, sooner or later.

### 20...Bh5 21 Qd2 Rae8 22 Bf2 Rg8



[FEN "4r1rk/p1p1n1pp/P1pb3q/3pNp1b/1P1N1P2/2P3P1/3Q1B1P/R3R1K1 w - - 0 23"]

Black hopes for 23 Nxc6 Nxc6 24 Nxc6 Bxf4 25 Qxf4 Qxc6 27 Bxa7 Be2, conquering the white a-pawn. But instead of chasing for pawns White increases the pressure:

### 23 Nd3! Qg6

Or 23...Bf7 24 Rxe7! Bxe7 25 Ne5 Qf6 26 Ndxc6 and for the small price of the exchange, White will enjoy a passed pawn on the a-file: +/-, at least. Even worse is 23...g5? 24 Ne6 +-.

### 24 Re6 Qf7 25 Ne5 Bxe5 26 Rxe5 c5

Not really a solution, but returning the pawn at least reduces the strength of the bishop f2.

### 27 bxc5 Bg4 28 Rae1 Ng6 29 Re6!





[FEN "4r1rk/p1p2qpp/P3R1n1/2Pp1p2/3N1Pb1/2P3P1/3Q1B1P/4R1K1 b - - 0 29"]

More effective than 29 Rxe8 Rxe8 30 c6, yet even here White has excellent prospects to win. Black's weak a-pawn would remain a serious handicap for the rest of the game.

**29...h6**

29...Rxe6 30 Nxe6 is hopeless. White threatens 31 Qxd5, and if 30...c6 31 Qb2 Re8, the invasion 32 Qb7 +- decides the game.

**30 Qe3 Rb8 31 Kg2 Rgf8 32 h3 Bh5 33 Qd3 Rb2 34 Rb1 Ra2 35 Rb7 Re8**

Black's last chance is a counter.

**36 Rxe8+ Qxe8 37 Rxc7**



[FEN "4q2k/p1R3p1/P5np/2Pp1p1b/3N1P2/2PQ2PP/r4BK1/8 b - - 0 37"]

**37...Qe1 38 Nc2 Qe4+**

Or 38...Qc1 39 Qd4 and wins.

**39 Qxe4 dxe4 40 Nb4 Rb2 41 Nd5 1-0**

Visibly shaken by the defeat, Black sighed: "The Open Games are simply too open." But his fighting spirit will certainly be back in the next column.

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## Sources

[1] C. E. Ranken: "The Scotch Gambit," in: *The British Chess Magazine* 1882, pp. 90-95

[2] W. Steinitz: *The Modern Chess Instructor*, London 1889, pp. 62-63

[3] W. T. Pierce: "The Scotch Gambit," in: *The British Chess Magazine* 1892, pp. 334-340

[4] P. R. v. Bilguer: *Handbuch des Schachspiels* (ed. by C. Schlechter), Berlin/Leipzig 1922

[5] L. Gutman: *Gewinnen mit Schottisch*, Kassel 1992

[6] J. Nunn e. a.: *Nunn's Chess Openings*, London 1999

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