



C O L U M N I S T S

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding

A Second Dram of the Scotch Gambit

Last month's column introduced the Scotch Gambit and looked at some of the minor lines. This article fills in the gaps by considering in detail the two main variations of the accepted gambit and also looked at the principal way of declining it (apart from transpositions to other openings).

I regret that this article is not as detailed as I originally intended. Extensive building work at my home, forcing me to be away from my library for most of the past three weeks, has obliged me to write this column on a laptop without access to most of my usual sources. To compensate, I have posted a large file of Scotch Gambit games at my website for download in PGN or ChessBase format; you can see the URL for the game files at the end of this column.

To recapitulate briefly, the main line of the Scotch Gambit arises by 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 The best known modern grandmaster game in the variation is the following.

E.Sveshnikov-V. Kupreichik, Hastings 1984

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Bc4 Bc5 5 c3 dxc3 6 Bxf7+ Kxf7 7 Qd5+



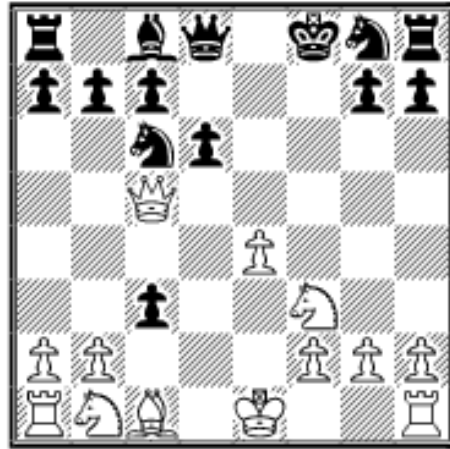
7...Kf8

Black can also play 7...Ke8 when 8 Qxc5 Qe7 9 Qxe7+ Ngxe7 10 Nxc3 gives White an edge according to Sveshnikov and ECO. Also possible is the finesse 8 Qh5+ Kf8 9 Qxc5+ transposing to the game below, but an extra move made by each

player.

8 Qxc5+ d6

8...Qe7 has been recommended but gives White a pleasant choice, so Kupreichik's move is not clearly worse says GM William Watson, annotating this game some years ago in *New In Chess*.



Now I am going to examine four principal variations

A 5...dxc3 met by 6 Bxf7+;

B 5...dxc3 6 Nxc3;

C 5...d3; and

D 5...d6

**A: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4
4 Bc4 Bc5 5 c3 dxc3 met by 6 Bxf7+**

This was the line I played against Daschkevich in the game featured in last month's column. 6 Bxf7+ is the obvious shot, it is usually recommended and is safe but I am unsure whether White gains a really significant advantage against best defence.

In fact, I do not believe there is a great deal to be added to what I wrote on this variation last time.

For an example of 8...Qe7 see my game with Dashkevich in last month's *Kibitzer* column. I still think 9 Qxc3 is the best reply when a possibility not mentioned in the last article is 9...Nf6 10 Nbd2 Nxe4 11 Nxe4 Qxe4+ 12 Be3 with compensation for White (Panov & Estrin).

After 8...Qe7 9 Qxc3 Qxe4+ 10 Be3, as in my game, expert opinions vary. "White may have the value of his Pawn" wrote Botterill; White has compensation says Watson; "more than sufficient" for White say Heyken & Fette. In the download database, White scores for more than the simple

recapture of the gambit pawn by 9 Qxc3 when 9...Nf6 “unclear” was an Euwe suggestion. It looks doubtful, e.g., 10 Bg5 h6 11 Bxf6 gxf6 12 Nbd2 Kg7 13 0–0–0 Be6 14 Nh4 Ne7 15 f4 Rf8 16 g4 Kh7 17 Rhg1 Qd7 18 f5+- (Hurt-Bonner, USA 1967) but there were a lot of sub-optimal moves for both sides in that line.

Instead of 9...Nf6, Black should prefer 9...Qf6 when Sveshnikov may be right to claim an edge for White but there has been little practical experience (+1 =1 –1 for White in the database). The obvious move is 10 0-0 but J.Cueto – O. Bergonzi, Parana 1993, saw instead 10 Bg5!? Qg6 (Black is reluctant to exchange queens in this game.) 11 Nbd2 Nf6 12 Bxf6 Qxf6 13 Rc1 Be6 14 Qa3 Kf7 15 e5 (This seems to give White some advantage.) 15...dxe5 16 Ne4 Qf4 17 Neg5+ Kg8 18 0–0 Bd5 19 Rfd1 h6 20 g3 Qf6 21 Rxd5 hxg5 22 Qb3 Rf8 23 Rd2+ Rf7 24 Qxb7 Qxf3? (24...Rh6 is better.) 25 Qxc6 e4 26 Rc3 Qg4 27 Rd8+ Rf8 28 Rxf8+ Kxf8 29 Qa8+ Kf7 30 Qxh8 c5 31 Qd8 1–0.

It seems to me probable that **9 Qc4** is the strongest move but there has been little experience with it.



9...Bg4

'Trying to entice White forward before he is quite ready' was Watson's comment here. He reckoned that Yudovich's recommendation 9...cxb2!? would very dangerous says Watson; after 10 Bxb2 Nf6 comes 11 e5! says Watson.

The only other game with 9 Qc4 in the database is E.Nekrasova-F.Gibentif, Moscow 1996, which continued instead

9...Nf6 10 Nxc3 Qe7 11 Be3 Qe6 12 Qxe6 Bxe6 13 Ng5 Re8 14 Nb5 h6 15 Nxe6+ Rxe6 (again some sub-optimal moves have been chosen.) Now the game continued 16 Nxc7 Rxe4 17 0–0–0 (Black's d-pawn is weak.) 17...Ke7 18 Kb1 Rd8 19 Rhe1 d5 20 Nxd5+ Nxd5 21 Bc5+ Kf6 22 Rxe4 Nc3+ 23 bxc3 Rxd1+ 24 Kc2 Ra1 25 Kb2 Rh1 26 h4 Kf5 27 Ra4 b5 28 Ra6 Ne5 29 Bxa7 Rxh4 30 Bd4 Nc4+ 31 Kb3 Rg4 32 g3 Ke4 33 Kb4 Rg5 34 a4 Nb2 35 axb5 1–0.

However this is not altogether convincing e.g. Black might have tried 17...Rc4+. A better way to use White's advantage would have been 16 f3, holding the e-pawn before breaking the Black queenside. Black cannot answer 16...d5 because of 17 Nxc7 Re7? 18 Bc5.

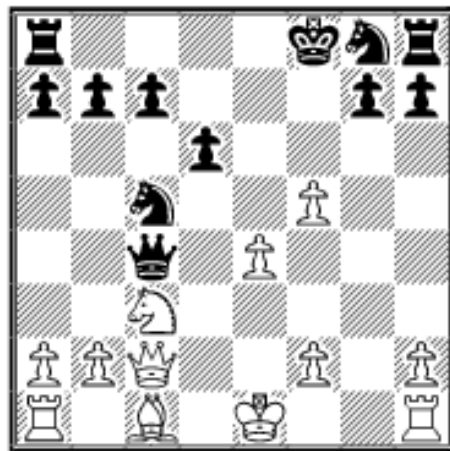
10 Nxc3 Bxf3 11 gxf3 Qf6 12 f4 Qf7 13 Qb5

White stands clearly better now according to Sveshnikov, whereas 13 Qxf7+ “would not give White much”.

13...Nd4 14 Qd3

Another possibility was 14 Qa4!? Ne6 15 Be3 Nxf4 16 0–0–0 (Sveshnikov).

14...Ne6 15 f5 Nc5 16 Qc2 Qc4



Possibly 16...Qh5 (Sveshnikov) was better.

17 Be3! Nf6?!

After 17...Nd3+! 18 Kd2 Nb4 19 Qb3! Qxb3 20 axb3 a6 21 Ra4 White stands somewhat better but Black is still in the game (Watson).

18 0–0–0 Re8

The futility of Black's 17th move is demonstrated in the variation 18...Ncxe4?? 19 Rd4 and White wins. Now Sveshnikov bolsters his e-pawn and goes on to win without much trouble.

19 f3 Ncd7 20 Rd4 Qc6 21 Kb1 Re7 22 Qe2 Ne5 23 Bg5 Qc5 24 Rhd1 Nc6 25 Rc4 Qe5 26 Nd5 Rf7 27 Bf4 Qe8 28 Nxc7 Rxc7 29 Bxd6+ Re7 30 e5 Nd7 31 f4 h5 32 Qd3 Rh6 33 Bxe7+ Kxe7 34 Qa3+ Kf7 35 e6+ Rxe6 36 fxe6+ Qxe6 37 Qd3 Nf6 38 f5 Qe5 39 Rc2 Kg8 40 Re2 Qc5 41 a3 Kh7 42 Rg2 Ne5 43 Qc2 Qe3 44 Rdg1 Neg4 1-0.

B: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Bc4 Bc5 5 c3 dxc3 6 Nxc3!?



This is a more open-ended line with many unanswered questions. This is what I played against Zlobinsky in last month's other main game. This is a true gambit line in which queens will not be coming off early and the gambit pawn is not easily regained. On the other hand, Black has no good grandmaster games to guide him.

Note that this position can arise via Goring Gambit (4 c3 dxc3 5 Nxc3 Bc5?! 6 Bc4) or Italian

Game (3 Bc4 Bc5 4 d4?! exd4? 5 c3 etc) and the fact that it can also do so after an inferior move by Black is suggestive that the Scotch Gambit approach may be a promising sequence for White.

6...d6

This is almost invariably played although you will find in the database a few examples of other moves. If instead 6...Nf6 White can consider 7 e5 (or first 7 0-0) and if 7...Ng4 maybe 8 Bxf7+!? Kxf7+ 9 Qd5+ regaining the

gambit pawn and bringing about a middle-game with opposite coloured bishops, which should favour the attacker.

7 Bg5!

As I said last time (when I dismissed 7 Qb3), this is the critical move. In the database White has only a slight plus score (7.5-6.5) but I would not put much store by this. It is a question of who analyses best in a complex situation.

7 0-0!? is a reasonable alternative says Botterill, e.g. 7...Nf6 8 Bg5 (8 e5? dxe5 9 Qe2 0-0 10 Bg5 Bg4 11 Rad1 Nd4 12 Qxe5 Bxf3 13 Qxc5 Bxd1 14 Rxd1 Ne4! Morschel-Reissman, Lugano ol 1968) 8...h6 (8...Be6 9 Nd5) 9 Bh4 as Black has difficulties over completing his development. 7 h3!? was a suggestion by Parma in ECO but it does not further development.

7...Nge7

7...f6 was looked at last month in Harding-Zlobinsky.

7...Qd7 is an important possibility. After 8 Qd2 h6 9 Bh4 Nge7 10 0-0-0 Ng6 11 Bg3

White needs an improvement on the 1999 Italian correspondence game S.Baccarini-D.Mazza, which went 11...a6 12 Nd5 0-0! (Improving on 12...b5 as played in Wade-Kitts, cited in last month's article) 13 Kb1 Re8 14 Rhe1 Nce5 15 Nxe5 Nxe5 16 Bxe5 Rxe5 17 b4 Ba7 18 f4 Re8 19 h3 c6 20 Nc3 b5 21 Be2 a5 22 Bg4 Qe7 23 Bxc8 Raxc8 24 bxa5 Bc5 25 e5 d5 26 Qd3 Qa7 27 f5 Qxa5 28 e6 Qb4+ 29 Ka1 fxe6 30 fxe6 Ra8 31 Rd2 Ra3 32 Rc1 Rxe6 33 Qf5 Rf6 34 Qc8+ Kh7 35 Rb2 Rxc3 36 Rxb4 Rxc1+ 37 Kb2 Re1 0-1.

Instead of 12 Nd5, Emanuel Lasker had recommended 12 Nh4 b5 13 Bb3 Bb7 14 Kb1 0-0-0 15 Rc1 and claimed an advantage for White, but George

Botterill was unconvinced. In his book ‘Open Gambits’ (page 99) he sums up as follows: “This is far from clear. All that one can say is that White has very free play for his pieces, whilst the pawn he has conceded plays no significant role — for the time being”.



8 Nd5

This move commits White to a piece sacrifice that may be unnecessarily drastic. On the other hand, the calmer 8 0-0 may not give clear compensation although it is hard to be sure without high-level practical tests.

Botterill said in *Open Gambits* that “8 0-0 seems to preserve a dangerous initiative” and he cited the following analysis by GM

Schlechter in his edition of the *Handbuch des Schachspiels*:

a) 8...0-0 9 Nd5 Kh8 10 b4 Bb6 11 b5 f6 12 bxc6 fxg5 13 cxb7 Bxb7 14 Nxb6 axb6 15 Nxg5 or

b) 8...h6 9 Bh4 Bg4 10 Nd5 Qd7 11 b4! Ng6 12 Bf6!? Bxf3 13 Qxf3 Bd4 14 Bxd4 Nxd4 15 Qc3 in both cases with good attacking chances.

However in the only practical example I have been able to find with this line, Black played 8...h6 9 Bh4 0-0 (instead of 9...Bg4 in Schlechter’s analysis above). Now D. Houpt-J.M. del Carril, IECG Email, 1998, continued 10 Nd5 Qd7 11 b4 Nxd5 12 bxc5 Nf4 13 cxd6 Na5 (Also possible is 13...Qxd6 14 Qxd6 cxd6.) 14 Rc1 Nxc4 15 Rxc4 Qxd6 16 Qc2 Bg4 17 Bg3 Bxf3 18 gxf3 c6 19 Rd1 Qf6 20 Rd7 Qa1+ 21 Rd1 Qf6 22 e5 Qg6 23 Qb2 Nh3+ 24 Kg2 Qe6 25 Rg4 Ng5 26 h4 Nh7 27 Rd6 Qe7 28 Rxh6 Rad8 29 Rd6 Rfe8 30 h5 Ng5 31 h6 Ne6 32 hxg7 1-0. Although White won this game, it is not very convincing.

8... f6?!

If Black does not want to provoke the piece sacrifice, he can

play instead 8...Be6 9 0-0 0-0 10 b4 Bxd5 11 exd5 Nxb4 when 12 a3 was played in Mieses-Salwe, Karlsbad 1907 (0-1, 62) but 12 Rb1! (Euwe) with the idea a3 is very awkward for Black, say Heyken and Fette (and Botterill too).

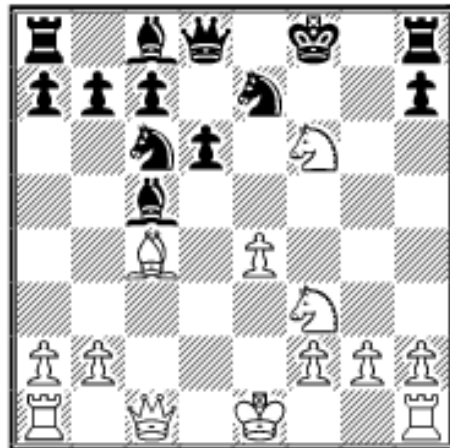
White also needs something against 8...h6!? because the Italian postal game Turati-Macchiagodena, 1992, saw Black win easily after 9 Bh4 g5 10 Nxg5? Nxd5. Since 10 Nf6+ does not seem to work, presumably White should have played 10 Bg3 and tried to exploit the dark-squared kingside weaknesses later on.

Maybe 8...h6 is the crucial test of 8 Nd5 after all.

9 Bxf6

This was briefly discussed last month.

9...gxf6 10 Nxf6+ Kf8 11 Qc1!



As I said last month, this Keres idea is close to winning for White.

11...Ng8

This is the critical move, and computers probably think it is good for Black, at least at first. Not 11...Kg7?? 12 Nh5+ and White mates in 3.

Last month I gave an example of White winning after 11...h6? 12 Qf4 and there are two more games with that line in the database.

12 Nh5

Now DellaValle-M.Mager, IECG Email 1997, ended 12...Bd7?? 13 Qf4+ Ke7 14 Qf7# 1-0 but Black has several

alternatives to the huge blunder at move 12.

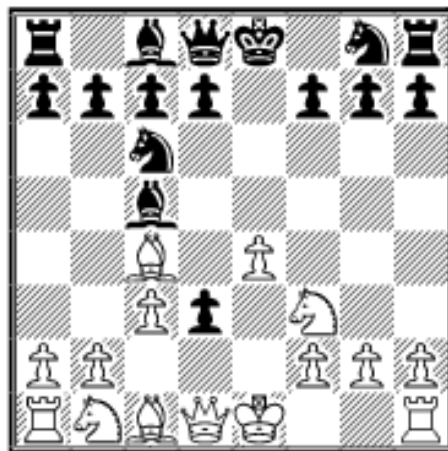
As I said last time, if 12...Bb4+, Botterill gave 13 Kf1 Qe7 14 Qf4+ Ke8 15 Ng5 Nh6 16 Nf6+ Kd8 17 Nd5 Qf8 (17...Qe5 18 Qh4) 18 Qh4 with decisive threats.

The most difficult reply to refute would seem to be 12...Qe7 e.g. 13 Qf4+ Ke8 14 Bxg8 Rxg8+ 15 Nf6+ Kg8 when 16 Nxg8+ Kxg8 leaves Black with two minor pieces for a rook, while 16 Ng5 Kg7 is also very messy.

Failing that, Black's attention should focus on 8...h6 and 7...Qd7.

It seems that 6 Nxc3 is a risky move for White, although the potential pay-off if Black goes wrong is greater than with 6 Bxf7+.

C: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Bc4 Bc5 5 c3 d3



This move, offering back the gambit pawn to slow White's development, is sometimes recommended. There are over 180 examples of it in the download database. Yet it has never been played against me so I hesitate to offer any clear recommendations here. There are some similarities with the

Evans Gambit line, 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 d3 but I would observe that here White is only one pawn down, which he will eventually recapture, and still has his b-pawn to advance. Therefore his chances must be better here than in the Evans.

Evgeny Sveshnikov - Arshak Petrosian Soviet Union, 1974

6 b4

White gets his queenside rolling. 6 O-O can transpose after 6...d6 7 b4 Bb6 8 a4 a6; if 6...Nf6 7 Qxd3.

6...Bb6 7 0-0

Typically, White is in no hurry to capture the doomed d3-pawn. 7 Qb3 is possible and could transpose to the game below after 7...Qf6 8 0-0 d6 9 a4 etc.

For 7 a4 a6 8 0-0 see below; however, 8 a5 may be premature. After 8...Ba7 White should try 9 0-0 Nf6 10 Qxd3 (Botterill, 'Open Gambits') but in practice has usually played 9 Qb3 Qe7 10 0-0 when:

a) 10...d6? 11 b5 axb5 12 Bxb5 (12 a6!?) and now 12...Qe6 (Barsch-Vukcevic) is a bit better than 12...Bd7 13 a6! (Kostic-Nielsen, Munich 1936) but White is doing well.

b) 10...Nf6 and now:

b1) Books tend to cite 11 Nbd2 0-0 12 Bxd3 d6 13 b5?! axb5 14 Qxb5 Bd7 with Black having an edge in Kostic-van Scheltinga, Stockholm 1937.

b2) White's best continuation may be 11 Bxd3 0-0 12 Bg5 (Kostic-Bouwmeester, Beverwijk 1952). This was drawn in 40 moves; see the download file for the continuation.

b3) A more modern example Guizar-Ekenlov, WT/M/GT/184 corr ICCF, 1991, went 11 e5?! (instead of 11 Nbd2), trying to force the pace but this is unsound:

11 e5? Nxe5 12 Nxe5 Qxe5 13 Bxf7+!? Kf8 14 Bc4 Ng4 15 g3 Bxf2+! 16 Rxf2+ Nxf2 17 Kxf2 Qe2+ 18 Kg1 d5!! (18...Qe1+ 19 Kg2 Qxc1 playable but doesn't set the trap; now if 19 Bxd5?? Bh3 mates.) 19 Bxd3 Qxd3 20 Ra2 Bh3

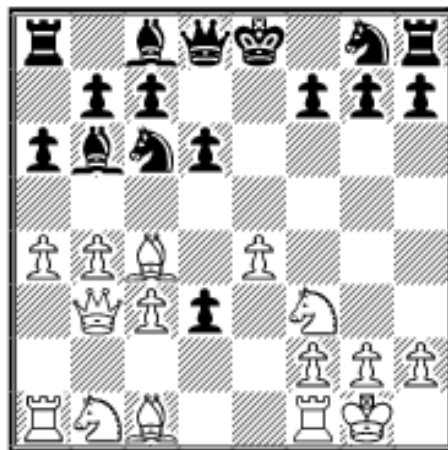
21 Rf2+ Ke8!? (21...Kg8 is safer.) 22 Bf4 Rf8 23 Nd2 (23 Bxc7? Qf1+!) 23...Kd7 24 Rf3! Qb5 25 c4 dxc4 26 Nxc4 Rae8 27 Qc3 Rf6 (27...Kc8?? 28 Nd6+) 28 g4! Bxg4 29 Rd3+ Ke6? (If 29...Kc8? 30 Bxc7!, not 30 Nb6+ Kb8) 30 Bxc7 Qf5 31 Re3+ Kf7 32 Nd6+ Rxd6 33 Bxd6 Be2! 34 Qc7+ Kg6 35 Rg3+ Bg4 36 Qc1 Re2 37 Bc5 Qe4 ½–½. However, Black was on top for most of the game; 29...Ke7 should win for him.

7...d6 8 a4 a6

8...a5 9 b5 gives White extra tempi.

9 Qb3

9 a5 Ba7 10 Qb3!? (or 10 Qxd3 — Botterill) 10...Qf6 transposes back to the main game (10...Qe7 see Kostic-Nielsen in the note to White's 7th). However, I think a4-a5 should be held back until it is clearly required.



The diagram position can arise via various move orders.

9...Qf6!

Or 9...Qe7 10 a5 Ba7 11 Bg5 Nf6 (Schlechter-Janowski, 1898); now 12 b5 axb5 13 a6 is very good for White says MCO.

10 a5

10 Na3 is an alternative. G.Crawley-D.Prasad, London 1987, continued 10...h6 11 Bxd3 Nge7 12 Nc4 Be6 13 Qc2 Bxc4 14 Bxc4 0–0 15 a5 Ba7 16 Bd2 Ng6 17 Bd5 Nge7 18 Bb3 Rad8 19 h3 d5 20 Rae1 Kh8 21 exd5 Nxd5 22 Re4 Qg6 23 Rfe1 f5 24 Re6 (White is clearly on top.) 24...Qg3 (just a little joke) 25 R1e2 Nf4 26 Bxf4 Qxf4 27 Ba4 Rd6 28 Bxc6 bxc6 29 Re8 Rdf6 30 Rxf8+ Rxf8 31 Re6 Qc4 32 Re7 Qd5 33 Qe2 Qd6 34 Qe5 Qxe5 35 Nxe5 Kh7 36 Nxc6 Bb8 37 Re6 1–0.

10...Ba7 11 b5! Ne5

If 11...axb5 12 a6! Nge7! (Not 12...bxc4 13 axb7 nor 12...bxa6 13 Bd5) 13 Bd5 Bb6 14 Bg5 Qg6 15 Bxe7 Nxe7 16 Nbd2 was I.Zaitsev analysis after a game he had with Aronin. Botterill says White can regain pawns on b5 and d3 but it is unclear if he has an advantage. Unzicker suggested 16...Rb8, 16...Be6 and 16...Bd7 as reasonable moves.

12 Nxe5 dxe5 13 bxa6!?

13 Be3 may be stronger, e.g. 13...axb5 14 Bxb5+ c6 15 Bxa7 and 16 Bxd3 (Gufeld).

13...bxa6 14 Qa4+!

Botterill suggested 14 Bd5 c6 (Keres) 15 Be3!, but computers are unconvinced.

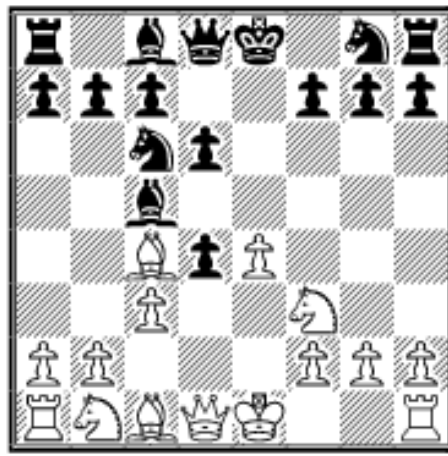
14...Bd7 15 Qd1

At this stage, White probably only has a very slight advantage but he went on to win.

15...Ne7 16 Qxd3 Bc8 17 Na3! 0–0 18 Nc2 Ng6 19 Nb4 Rd8 20 Qg3 Re8 (20...Nf4 21 Nd5!) 21 Bg5 Qd6 22 Rfd1 Qc5 23 Bd5 Rb8 24 Be3 Qxc3 25 Na2 Qxa5 26 Bxa7 Nf4 27 Bc4 Rb2 28 Qc3 Qxc3 29 Nxc3 Bg4 30 Rdc1 Ra8 31 Rxa6 Rb4 1–0

D: 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Bc4 Bc5 5 c3 d6

Finally, I want to take another look at this quiet reply, which was only briefly considered last month.



G.Espina - A.Valdes Cuba corr, 1996

6 0-0 Bg4 7 Qb3

This move cost White more than three hours thought. In all the books he consulted it was given a ? but it does seem to be the right move.

7...Qd7?!

It is much more common for Black to play 7...Bxf3 8 Bxf7+ Kf8 when:

a) 9 Bxg8 Rxd8 10 gxf3 g5, for example 11 Qe6 (11 Qd1 Qd7 12 b4 Bb6 13 Bb2 d3! 14 Qxd3 Ne5 15 Qe2 Qh3 16 Nd2 g4! 17 f4 Nf3+ 18 Nxf3 gxf3+ 19 Kh1 Qg2# 0-1 Kolisch-Anderssen, Paris 1860) 11...Ne5 12 Qf5+ Kg7 13 Kh1 (13 Bxg5? Kh8) 13...Kh8 14 Rg1 g4! 15 f4 Nf3! 16 Rxd4 Qh4!! 17 Rg2 Qxh2+! 18 Rxd2 Rg1# 0-1 V.Rainer-Steinitz, Vienna 1860.

b) 9 gxf3 Nf6 (9...g5 10 Bh5 Ne5 11 f4!, or 9...Ne5 10 cxd4 Bxd4 11 Bxg8 Rxd8 12 f4 Kostic-Illa, Buenos Aires 1913, in the database) 10 Bf4 dxc3 11 bxc3 Na5 12 Qe6 Qe7=.

No doubt Espina thought he found some way to improve on this for White, possibly in the 9 gxf3 line, but he doesn't say what in his 'Telejaque' notes. This is something of a problem for Scotch Gambit players and White needs a more convincing line against 5...d6.

8 Bxf7+

In the game A.Batulev-V.Raceanu, EU Youth Ch, Rimavska Sobota 1996, 8 cxd4 Bxf3 9 Qxf3 Nxd4 10 Qd1 Ne6 11 Nc3

Nf6 12 Kh1 0–0 13 f4 Bb6 14 Bd3 Nc5 15 Bc2 Rae8 16 Qf3 Qg4 gave Black the advantage.

8...Qxf7 9 Qxb7 Kd7 10 Qxa8

Not 10 Nxd4?? Bxd4 11 cxd4 Rb8 12 Qa6 Nxd4 13 Qxa7 Rb4 14 Nc3 Ne7 0–1 P.Barrielle-G.Scaramuzzo, France-Italy corr 1992.

10...Bxf3 11 gxf3 Qxf3

If 11...dxc3 12 Nxc3 (12 bxc3? Qxf3 13 Nd2 Qh3 14 Qf8 Nf6 15 Qxh8 Ng4 16 Qxg7+ Ne7 favours Black.) 12...Qxf3 13 Be3 Qg4+ 14 Kh1 Qf3+ 15 Kg1 Qg4+ = (Scaramuzzo, CC Yearbook 8).

12 Nd2 Qh3 13 Qf8

The logical move, which surprised Black. The known example was 13 e5?! dxe5 14 b4 Nf6! 15 Qxh8 Ng4 16 Qxg7+ Be7 17 Nf3 e4! 18 Ne5+ Ncxe5 19 Bf4 Nf3+ 20 Kh1 Nfxh2 0–1 Strautmanis-Palau, The Hague ol 1928.

13...Nf6

Arpad Foldeak, in his book on Chess Olympiads, said Palau had planned to answer Qf8 by 13...Nge7 14 Qxh8 dxc3 15 bxc3 (15 Qxg7!?) 15...Ne5 16 Qf8 g5 17 Re1 (17 Rb1) 17...Ng4! but this line is not very convincing.

14 Qxh8

Not 14 Qxg7+? Ne7 15 Qxh8 Ng4 16 Nf3 Qxf3.

14...Ng4 15 Qxg7+ Ne7

If 15...Kc8 16 Qf8+ Kb7 17 Qf4.

16 Nf3 Qxf3 17 Bg5

The only move that is really new in the whole game. Later White looked in the books and found 17 Qg5 dxc3 18 Qf4 cxb2 19 Qxf3 bxa1Q 20 Qxg4+ Ke8 21 Be3 Walbrodt-Caro, 1897.

17...d5 18 cxd4 Qh3 19 Bf4 Qf3 20 Bg3 1-0

Finally, I have a little feedback. In the line 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Bc4 Be7 I wrote last time that “If 4...Be7 5 c3!? Black must play 5...Nf6, 5...d6 or 5...d3. Acceptance of the second pawn by 5...dxc3?! walks into 6 Qd5 (threatening mate on f7) 6...Nh6 7 Bxh6 when Black must castle, losing a piece for assorted pawns.”

However, GM Karsten Mueller points out that “After 7...0-0 8 Bc1 Nb4 9 Qd1 c2 Black wins the piece back. So 8 Nxc3 is probably best, but Black wins the piece back as well.”

Thor Løvholt (a Norwegian correspondence master) writes: “I read your Kibitzer *A Glass of Scotch* and like it very much. I have played this variation at least 20 times — after I read *An Opening Repertoire for the Attacking Player* by Raymond Keene and David Levy — and I seldom lose in the variation with 4 Bc4 — but I think the "best" way for black is 4...Nf6 5 0-0 Bc5. (I like a glass of Scotch as well, but not while playing...)”

Here is the URL for my page linking to the Scotch Gambit database, which is available in either PGN or new ChessBase archive (CBV) format:

<http://www.chessmail.com/games/freegames.html>

The database has over 1600 games of widely varying quality. It is only intended as source material and I do not guarantee the accuracy of all the data. These files will not be

available indefinitely; I will probably remove them in October.

My conclusion is that while the Scotch Gambit is an interesting sideline, there is no compelling reason to prefer 4 Bc4 to the strong move 4 Nxd4!

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