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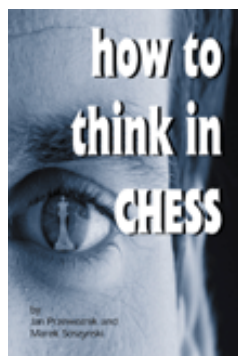
*Opening Lanes* is based in large part on readers' questions. Do you have a question about a particular opening line? Baffled by a branch of the Benoni or Budapest? Submit your questions (with you full name and country of residence please) and perhaps Gary will reply in his next *Chess Cafe* column...

*Yes, I have a question for Gary!*

## COLUMNISTS

### *Opening Lanes*

Gary Lane



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## The Great Escape

I have to admit that it is not often that this column has to deal with questions about an Englishman who was a Japanese prisoner of war during World War 2. Then again, I suppose not everyone had the initiative to spend his spare time studying a particularly tricky line of the Two Knights Defence.

**Olimpiu Urcan** from **Singapore** writes "My question is about the Two Knights Defence. I am very much interested in finding out if 8...Rb8!? [Colman Variation] was ever tried in high-level competitions (talking about matches for world title, qualification matches, candidate matches, Olympiads, and so on...).

I am working on a book on E.E. Colman, the one who apparently invented the system for Black. If it was played would you be so kind to provide me some sort of historical evolution of these games? Next to this - but related - I am interested in any notes from the modern chess opening books on 8...Rb8. What these books say? It will help my research a lot and I will mention you'll receive my acknowledgements if I ever get an answer."

Well, if I did everything you requested I would probably also write a book on the subject but I wish you success with your project. Naturally, there are plenty of people

who don't know anything about the Colman Variation so I have chosen an entertaining game to reveal a few more secrets of the line.

### ***Bruno Carlier-Mark Condie London 1985***

**1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6** The start of the Two Knights opening. **4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Na5 6 Bb5+ c6 7 dxc6 bxc6 8 Qf3**

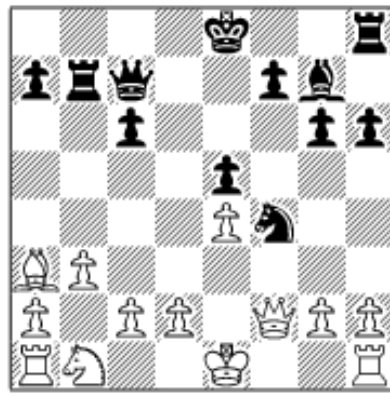


White pins the c-pawn in pursuit of the attack. 8 Be2 is the main alternative and is currently the fashionable line. The entertaining game I. Ponter-J. Rudd, Exmouth 2003, continued 8...h6 9 Nf3 e4 10 Ne5 Bd6 11 d4 exd3 12 Nxd3 Qc7 13 b3 0-0 14 Bb2 Re8 15 h3 Bf5

(15...Ne4 has also been tested) 16 0-0 Rad8 17 Nc3 Qc8 18 f4 c5!? 19 Qc1 c4 20 Ne5 Rxe5 21 fxe5 Qc5+ 22 Rf2 Qxe5 23 g4? (the prospect of a black queen invading the heart of his position makes White panic and quickens his downfall. 23 Kf1 is the best chance when 23 ..Qh2?? allows 24 Rxf5 winning) 23...Qg3+ 24 Rg2 Qxh3 25 gxf5 Bc5+ 26 Rf2 Qg3+ 27 Kh1 Bxf2 28 Qf1 Rd4 0-1 **8...Rb8** This is the start of the Colman variation which is named after the Englishman Eugene Earnest Colman (1878–1964). He analysed the line while a prisoner of war and later published his thoughts on the subject. The reason why it merited a lot of attention was because Black did not bother to defend the c-pawn. **9 Bd3** The bishop retreats because White must not significantly fall behind in development. 9 Bxc6+ is a good example of what not to do and greediness is rightly punished upon 9...Nxc6 10 Qxc6+ Nd7 11 Ne4 Rb6 12 Qa8? (12 Qc3 Bb7 helps Black to maintain the initiative) 12...Rb7! (Black defends the a-pawn and manages to trap the white queen curtailing the game) 13 d4 Nb6 14 Bg5 f6 0-1 G.Yakit-G.Sivri,Izmir 2003. **9...h6** I think if Black is looking for an improvement

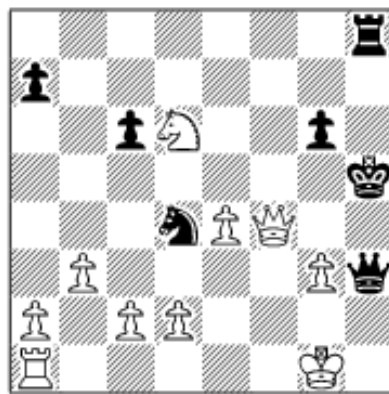
then 9...Bd6!? should be considered. For example: 10 Nc3 0-0 11 a3 h6 12 Nge4 Nxe4 13 Nxe4 f5 14 Nxd6 Qxd6 (Black is a pawn down but in practical terms it is lot easier for him to activate his pieces) 15 Qe2 c5 16 b4 Nc6 (16...cxb4 17 axb4 Qxb4 18 Qxe5! is very good news for White) 17 Bc4+ Kh7 18 c3 (the white bishop on c1 is still looking entombed but he is probably just counting the pawns) 18...e4 19 d3 Ne5 20 dxe4 Nxc4 21 Qxc4 Ba6 (Black is still happy to shed pawns in order to prevent White from castling kingside) 22 Qxc5 Qd3 23 Qe3 Qc2 24 Bd2 f4! 25 Qf3 Rbe8 0-1 G.Tas-

H.Sonntag,Belgian Team Championship 2003. **10 Ne4 Nd5 11 b3 g6 12 Bb2** The Dutch master employs the natural move by attacking the e5 pawn with the bishop. The key is that Black must respond positively before White can consolidate. 12 Qg3 was tried in the heavyweight encounter J.Van der Wiel-J.Timman, Leeuwarden 1981. That game went: 12...Nf4 13 Bb2 Bg7 14 Ba3 Nb7 15 Nbc3 f5 16 Ne2 g5 17 Nxf4 exf4 18 Qf3 Qa5 19 Nd6+ (it looks like White is about to win but the Dutch grandmaster fends off the offensive with great energy) 19...Nxd6 20 Qxc6+ Kf7 21 Bxd6 Re8+ 22 Kd1 Bxa1 23 Bc4+ Be6 24 Re1 Bxc4 25 Qxc4+ Kg6 26 Bxb8 Rxb8 27 c3 Qxa2 28 Re6+ Kh5 29 Rxh6+! allowed a wild game to end in perpetual check so a draw was agreed. **12...Bg7 13 Qg3 Qc7** I think 13...Nf4 looks like an interesting choice when 14 Qxf4 exf4 15 Bxg7 Rf8 16 Nf6+ Ke7 17 0-0 looks amusing but maybe White is even on top! **14 Ba3 Nb7 15 Ba6** Bruno is taking charge of the position by striving to play Nd6+ and as part of the plan he wishes to exchange the defending knight on b7. **15...Bf5 16 f3 Bxe4 17 fxe4 Nf4 18 Bxb7 Rxb7 19 Qf2**



**19...Bf8?! The Scottish international is understandably fed up with not being able to castle and takes measures to exchange the annoying bishop on a3. However, Black should have sought an alternative. For instance: 19...Qd7 might be a better reply when 20 0-0**

**Qd4 21 Qxd4 Ne2+ 22 Kh1 Nxd4** allows an odd draw after **23 Rc1 Ne2 24 Re1 Nd4 25 Rc1 Ne2. 20 Bxf8 Kxf8 21 g3 Ne6 22 0-0 Kg8 23 Na3** Carlier has successfully passed through the opening stage without allowing much counterplay and boasts an extra pawn. In contrast Black's pieces still lack harmony meaning it will be difficult to pose White any tactical obstacles in the short-term. **23...h5 24 Nc4 h4** I would normally praise Black for going on the offensive but with no pieces ready to back up the plan it is has little chance of success. **25 Qf6 hxg3 26 hxg3 Qd7 27 Qxe5 Nd4 28 Nd6 Qh3** The Black queen is on the verge of doing something special but White has seen further and now wraps up the game in style. **29 Qe8+ Kg7 30 Rxf7+ Rxf7 31 Qxf7+ Kh6 32 Qf4+ Kh5**



**33 Kf2!** The simple but effective threat is to bring the rook into play by g4+ and if the black queen takes the pawn then Rh1+ leading to mate. **33...c5** Or **33...Rh7 34 g4+ Qxg4 (34...Kh4 35 Qf6+ g5 36 Rg1 Qh2+ 37 Rg2 Qf4+ 38 Qxf4 gxf4 39 Rh2+ wins) 35 Rh1+ Qh4+ 36 Qxh4 mate. 34 g4+ Kh4 35 Qf6+ Kxg4 36 Rg1+ 1-0**

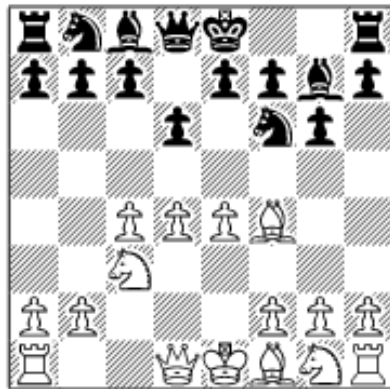
**Sean Tobin** from the **USA** is baffled by an opening. He says "My question for you today is, what on earth is this opening system called? I have started to play the King's Indian Defense and have been hit with this odd-looking

sort of Bishop move several times... 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Bf4 What on earth is this called? Certainly is a different way to go about playing for control of the e5-square. Looking the move up in my database I see that this 5 Bf4 has been trotted out on several occasions. Is there any light that you can shed on this variation?"

I have to admit that at first sight it seems to be some sort of London System where White is happy to play c4 instead of the usual c3. However combined with an early e4 I just think it is just an odd move order that should be harmless.

### ***A.Premilovac-Greg Canfell Sydney 1995***

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Bf4**

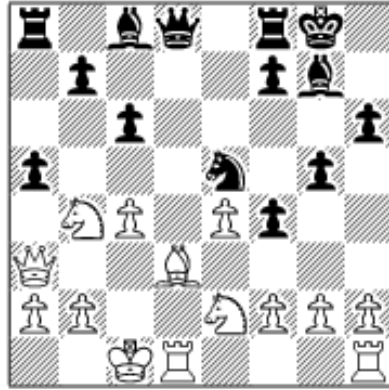


**5...0-0 6 Bd3** After 6 Nf3 Black can seek to exploit the bishop on f4 with 6...Bg4 7 Be2 when 7...Nfd7 is a key idea because by retreating the king's knight it puts pressure on d4 and also introduces the possibility of ...e7-e5 8 Qd2 Nc6 (8...e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 Bg5 gives

White a slight edge) 9 d5 (9 Be3 is well met by 9...e5 with equal chances) 9 ..Bxf3 10 Bxf3 Nd4 11 Bd1 Ne5 12 Bxe5 (12 Qxd4?? Nf3+ 13 Bxf3 Bxd4 wins) 12...Bxe5 13 f4 Bg7 14 0-0 c5 when Black has the better practical chances, H.Fronczek-A.Wojtkiewicz, Katowice 1992. **6...Nc6** Black reacts positively by targeting the d4 pawn and preparing ...e7-e5 to hit the bishop on f4. **7 Nge2 e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 Bg5** White has come out of the opening with no advantage which indicates that the early excursion with the bishop is harmless **9...h6 10 Bh4 g5 11 Bg3 Nh5 12 Nd5 Nf4 13 Bxf4?! 13 0-0** is one way to maintain the tension. **13...exf4** Canfell has the upper hand thanks to his dark-squared bishop which is in charge of the a1-h8 diagonal.

It is not easy to see how White can create counterplay.

**14 Qb3 Ne5 15 0-0-0** White ambitiously castles queenside in an effort to stir up complications. Still, it is rather risky because the bishop on g7 is a great attacking weapon. **15...c6 16 Nb4** 16 Ndc3 Nxd3+ 17 Rxd3 Qxd3 18 Rd1 Qxd1+ 19 Nxd1 Re8 20 f3 b6 is better for Black. **16...a5 17 Qa3?**



17 Nc2 is a better bet although 17...Qe7 intending ...a5-a4 gives Black the brighter prospects. **17...axb4 18 Qxa8 Nxd3+ 19 Kc2 Qf6!** White probably missed this idea in his earlier calculations but as already mentioned the influence of the dark-squared bishop

should not be underestimated. **20 Rxd3** Or 20 Kxd3 Rd8+ 21 Kc2 Qxb2 mate. **20...Qxb2+ 21 Kd1 Bg4 22 Qxf8+ Kxf8 23 f3 Be6 24 Rb3 Qxa2 0-1**

I mentioned last month that anyone who plays the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit tends to be passionate about the opening. I will allow you to judge **Lev D.**

**Zilbermints** from the **USA**, commitment to his favorite attacking weapon. He says "I am writing concerning your January 2004 column, in which Jeffrey Reep of USA complains about not being able to win with the Zilbermints Gambit in the Euwe Defense to the BDG. The line in question runs 1 d4 d5 2 e4 de4 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 f3 ef3 5 Nxf3 e6 6 Bg5 Be7 7 Bd3 Nc6 8 00 Nxd4 9 Kh1 Nxf3 10 Qxf3 h6! Here Mr. Reep continued 11 Qh3 e5! 11 Qh4 and Black was able to trade quite a few pieces. My own analyses shows that after 11...Qd4! that is indeed the case. Presumably that is what Mr. Reep encountered. Perhaps he can tell us the name of his opponent, the date of the game, and the rest of the game score?

I am almost finished with a manuscript for a book on the 6 5 Nxf3 e6 6 Bg5 Be7 7 Bd3 Nc6 8 0-0 Nxd4 variation.

Covers all lines, accepted, declined, delayed, transpositions, related lines, and history. A bibliography is also included. Over 200 games are covered, 1952 - 1968; 1982 - 1993; and the line's extensive analysis and playing by me over the last ten years, 1993-2003.

“Now, to the point. I have two games in my collection, both on Internet Chess Club, where the sub-variation 10 Qxf3 h6 was played. The first game continued 11 Bxf6Bxf6 12 Ne4 Bd7 13 Rad1 (the move Mr. Reep missed) 00 14 Nxf6 gf6 15 Qxb7 Qe7 16 Qf3 Rfd8 17 Qg3+ Kf7 18 Bh7 Qc5 19 Rxf6 Qg5 20 Qc3 Bc6 21 Rxf7 Kxf7 22 Rf1+ Ke7 23 Qxc6 Qe5 24 Be4 Qd6 25 Qc3 e5 26 Bxa8 Rxa8 27 Qf3 Re8 28 Rd1 Qf6 29 Rd7+ Ke6 30 Qxf6 Kxf6 31 Rxc7 e4 32 Kg1 Kf5 33 Kf1 Kf4 34 Ke2 h5 35 Rxa7 Rc8 36 Rf7+ Ke5 37 c3 Rb8 38 Re7+ Kf5 39 b3 Rd8 40 Rc7 h4 41 a4 Rg8 42 Kf2 Kf4 43 Rf7+ Ke5 44 a5 e3+ 45 Kf3 Ke6 46 Rf4 e2 47 Re4+, 1-0, Zilbermints - guest398, Internet Chess Club, 10 minute unrated blitz, 4/4/2003.

“Another game continued 12...c6 13 Nxf6 Qxf6 14 Qxf6 gf6 15 Rxf6 Ke7 16 Raf1 Rf8 17 Rxh6 Bd7 18 Rh7 e5 19 Bc4 Be6 20 Be6 Ke6 21 Rh3 Rad8 22 Rb3 Rd7 23 h4 Rh8 24 g3 f5 25 Kg2 b6 26 Re1 Rd2+ 27 Kf3 Rxc2 28 Rbe3 e4+ 29 Kf4 Rg8 30 Rxe4 fxe4 31 Kxe4 Rxb2 32 Kd3+ Kd7 33 Re3 Rxa2 34 Ke4 Re8 35 Kf4 Ra4+ 36 Kf3 Rxe3+ 37 Kxe3 Ke7 38 Kf3 Kf7 39 g4 Kg7 40 Kg3 Kh8 41 h5 Rd4 42 Kh4 c5 43 Kg5 a5 44 h6 Rxg4+ 45 Kxg4 a4 46 Kh4, 1-0. Black overstepped the time limit. Zilbermints - ewc (1812), ICC, 3 0 rated blitz, 3/23/2003.

“Finally, I need to take a closer look at the game V. Drueke - T. Sawyer, corr. 1997, which is cited as ‘proof’ of my gambit being speculative. First, in correspondence, you get more time (days!!) to think; and second, White could have played better. The game in question went 1 d4 d5 2 e4 de4 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 f3 ef3 5 Nxf3 e6 6 Bg5 Be7 7 Bd3 Nc6 8 00 Nxd4 9 Kh1 Nc6 10 Qe1 Bd7 (the so-called Sawyer-Drueke Sub-Variation) 11 Rd1 h6 and here, instead of the premature 12 Qh4?

White should have played 12 Bh4! with an unclear game.

“All this goes to show that if you want to play my double-gambit, you should know the theory of this line. But, hey, that's true about any opening. Case in point.”

If some you are wondering about the key position it occurs after 1 d4 d5 2 e4 de4 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 f3 ef3 5 Nxf3 e6 6 Bg5 Be7 7 Bd3 Nc6 8 0-0 Nxd4



I am not convinced that White has enough for the material but have to admire Mr Zilbermints commitment to advance his line.

I have another question on this opening and the fact that it mentions a recent tournament success of mine naturally made it go to the top of my list of questions!

“Dear Gary- First , congratulations on winning the Australian Championship. Second , a question about the Blackmar-Diemer gambit. In the last round of the Australian reserves I was drawn against a promising junior. I saw that in an earlier game his response to e4-d5 was d4 - so I thought preparing for the gambit was worth a go .I looked at Joe Gallagher's *Beating the Anti-King's Indian* and NCO (which had the same line - not surprising since Gallagher prepared that portion). All went well until 11 Qe2, when I was expecting Qe1. I didn't think 11...a6 was right as a response and quickly went astray, falling to a very nice finish. Can you assist with a sensible response or plan for black? I ran the game through Fritz without any joy. It gave 13...h6 as equal , but it seemed like an invitation for a sacrifice. The line 12...a6 13 Ne4 Qb4 14 a3 Qxb2 15 Rb1 1Qxa3 16 Ra1 Qb1 17 Rfb1 Nxe4 18 Rb4 Nxg5 19 Nxg5 Bxg5, leaving Black with 2 pieces and 3 pawns against a queen doesn't seem good for black.” **Andrew Short,**



## Adelaide, South Australia

I have to admire Andrew's preparation for the encounter. I would guess that the real problem is that after the opening moves Black might be fine but it is White who has plenty of experience in playing those sort of double-edged positions.

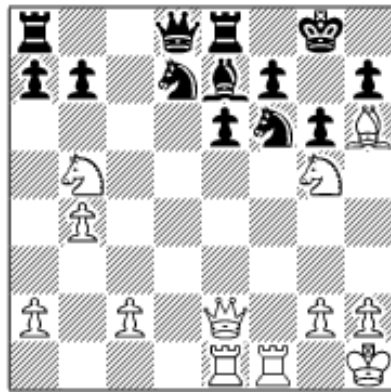
### *Moulthan Ly-Andrew Short Reserves, Adelaide 2004*

**1 e4 d5 2 d4 dxe4 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 f3 exf3 5 Nxf3 e6** The is known as the Euwe Defence. **6 Bg5 Be7 7 Bd3 c5 8 dxc5 Qa5 9 0-0 Qxc5+ 10 Kh1 Nbd7**



Or 10...0-0 11 Qe1 h6 12 Qh4 Nd5 (12...hxg5 is an invitation for White to go on the attack with 13 Nxc5 Re8 14 Bh7+ Kf8 15 Qh5! (a great looking move) 15...Qxc5 16 Qxc5 Nxc7 17 Qh5 when I prefer White) 13 Nxd5 Bxc5 14 Nxc5 Qxd5 15 Nxf7 Rxf7 16 Rxf7 Kxf7 17 Rf1+ Ke8 18 Bg6+ Kd7 19 Rf7+ Kd6 20 Qe7+ Ke5 21 Rf5+ 1-0 J.Ribes Oliveras-J.Arufe Vazquez,, Sant Boi 1997. **11 Qe2** White is content to activate his queen in order to co-ordinate his rooks. I suspect if Black is Kramnik he would certainly win with the extra pawn but for most players it is not clear how Black should respond. 11 Qe1 is the line that is covered by Gallagher. The analysis continues: 11...a6 12 Qh4 Qb4 I think this is why the line has drifted from popularity because it is awkward for White to avoid exchanging queens 13 Nd4 Qxb2 14 Nce2 Ne5 15 a4 Qb6 16 Rxf6 gxf6! (an improvement on 16 ..Nxd3 17 Rff1 f6 18 Be3 Nc5 19 Nb3 Qc6 20 Bxc5 Bxc5 21 Qh5+ 1-0 Sneiders-Breunig, Corr 1970-71) 17 Bxf6 Qd8 18 Rf1 Bxf6 19 Rxf6 Ng4 winning. **11...0-0** I suspect 11...a6 is a useful waiting move. N.Tripoteau-V.Moret, Vichy 2000 continued: 12 Rae1 Qb6 13 Bc1 Nc5 14 Bc4 Bd7 15 Ne5 0-0 16 Rf3 (as usual with this opening White always tries to attack

at every opportunity) 16...Bc6 17 Rh3 Nce4 18 Nxe4 Bxe4 19 Bg5 Bf5 (Black has to be careful because 19...Bd5 20 Bxd5 exd5 21 Bxf6 Bxf6 22 Nd7 is better for White) 20 Rf3 Rad8? 21 Nxf7! Rxf7 22 Rxf5 exf5 23 Qxe7 Rdf8 24 Rd1 h6 25 Be3 Qa5 26 b4 Nd5 27 Bxd5 Qxd5 28 Qxf8+ Rxf8 29 Rxd5 1-0. **12 Rae1 Qa5** Andrew Short gives the line 12...a6 13 Ne4 Qb4 14 a3 Qxb2 15 Rb1 Qxa3 16 Ra1 Qb4 17 Rfb1 Nxe4 18 Rxb4 Nxf5 19 Nxf5 Bxf5 and I agree that White is on top of the position. **13 Ne4 Qd8** In the last few moves Black has manoeuvred his queen from the useful square of c5 to the passive square of d8, which has not improved his position. **14 Nd4 g6?! It** makes no sense to voluntarily weaken the kingside until there is a clear threat. **15 Bh6 Re8 16 Ng5 Nc5** 16...a6 allows 17 Ndx6 and Black's position crumbles. **17 Bb5 Bd7** 17...Qxd4 is a temptation but 18 Bxe8 Nxe8 19 Rxf7 is a killer blow. **18 b4 Bxb5 19 Nxb5 Ncd7**



**20 Nxf7!** A typical idea in the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit to wreck the protection of the black king. **20...Qb6** Of course, 20...Kxf7 allows 21 Qxe6 mate. **21 Be3 Qc6 22 Nd4 Qc8 23 Nh6+ Kh8 24 Nxe6** White dominates the position and it is just a matter of time until Black calls it a day and packs up the pieces. **24...Bxb4 25 Bd4 Bc3 26 Qd3 Qc6 27 Qxc3 Rxe6 28 Rxe6 Qxe6 29 Rxf6 1-0**

**Kishore Sreetharan** from **Canberra, Australia** says “I have a question here regarding the Sicilian opening. I very much respect this opening but have never ventured to explore it. I tend to use double-edged openings as black such as the Centre-Counter and Benoni and am hereby asking which Sicilian do you suggest I should look into??”

I think the easiest thing to do is to have a look at the

games of someone famous such as Anand or Kasparov and see if you like the way they handle the Sicilian. In this way you could discover a particular line of the Sicilian that you enjoy. Of course, the old games are also a good way of learning so watch out for a collection of games by the old masters. I have to admit that most juniors prefer the Dragon Variation mainly because it has the best name! However, the tactical possibilities do not appeal to everyone and the intricate variations demand a lot of time to learn at a high level. Indeed, you could probably learn to speak French, travel around the world for 3 months before most people have come to terms with the Yugoslav Attack featuring 9 g4. Then again, if anyone still wants to try out the Dragon then any books or videos by Chris Ward are recommended. I think he claims that it wasn't love at first sight of the opening – it was quicker than that!

Anyway, to give you a glimpse of the Sicilian here is a recent game:

**Javier Martin Perez-Karel Van der Weide Seville 2004**

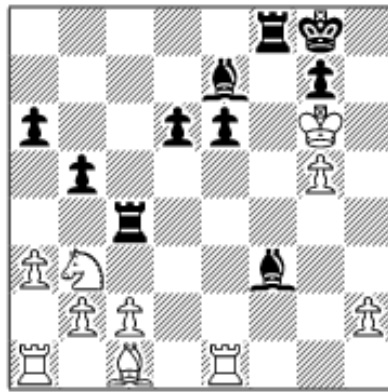
**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6**



This is known as the Kan Variation. The main difference compared to the Najdorf or the Dragon is that Black has not yet committed any of his pieces. This gives Black a certain flexibility depending how White responds. **5 Nc3 d6 6 Be2 b5**

Black decides on queenside expansion as a way to target the e4 pawn by a queenside fianchetto and by threatening ...b5-b4. **7 a3 Bb7 8 f4 Nf6 9 Bf3 Qc7** Black's set-up now resembles a Scheveningen system which reflects the transpositional possibilities of the Kan. **10 0-0 Nbd7 11 Kh1 Be7 12 Qe2 Rc8** Or 12...0-0 13 Bd2 Nb6 14 Be1 Rac8 15 g4 Qc4 16 Qe3?? (Oops!) 16...Qxf1+ 0-1 A.Khudyakov-

O.Alexandrova, Alushta 2003. **13 g4** Also possible: **13 Be3 0-0 14 Nb3 Nb6 15 Bxb6 Qxb6 16 e5 dxe5 17 fxe5 Nd7 18 Rad1** led to roughly equal chances in H.Eickhoff-J.Klovans, Bad Bevensen 2000. **13...Qc4** Black is understandably worried about the possibility of an attack and offers the exchange of queens to ease matters. **14 Qd3 h6 15 g5 hxg5 16 fxg5 Nh5** The threat of course is ...Ng3+. **17 Kg2 Ne5 18 Qxc4 Rxc4 19 Nb3 Nxf3 20 Kxf3 f5** This all part of the game plan of putting pressure on the e4 pawn although I don't suppose Black has quite this position in mind. However, the ending is very promising for Van der Weide and he continues with great accuracy **21 Re1 fxe4+ 22 Nxe4 0-0+ 23 Kg4 Bxe4 24 Kxh5 Bf3+ 25 Kg6**



It might not seem possible but this is a genuine position where the white king is attacking! **25...Rh4 0-1**

And finally, in Canada there is not much to do in winter so all chess players try to think up wacky chess lines. This is just my guess after

Craig Sadler, sent an e-mail with the message "Any opinions on 1

e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 f5 as a way to avoid the stodgy Four Knights Defense? Play it like a King's Gambit reversed?"

It certainly looks fun and could catch out a few players who are looking forward to a nice dull opening as White. I had a quick look through the books on the Four Knights and they all seem to agree it is not worth even mentioning. However, I have tracked down a game at club level, which indicates it could be a useful surprise weapon.

***Milan Ninchich-Adrian Flitney Doeberl Cup, Canberra 2000***

**1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 f5**



The perfect surprise gambit or just a way to make White laugh? **4 d4** If you want to know more about this line then I would head for the Latvian Gambit and the move-order 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 f5 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 d4. Instead 4 Bb5 is not critical because ...f5 has been seen before in

the Ruy Lopez. The old game M.Schapiro-S.Tartakower, Barmen 1905, is a marvelous advert for Black's opening policy after 4...Nf6 5 exf5 e4 6 Qe2 (6 Ng5 is worth investigating) 6...Qe7 7 Bxc6 bxc6 8 Nh4 d5 9 d3 exd3 10 cxd3 Ba6 11 Qxe7+ (if 11 0-0 then 11...Qxe2 12 Nxe2 Bxd3 is in Black's favour) 11...Bxe7 12 d4 0-0 13 Nf3 Bb4 14 Bd2 Rae8+ 15 Kd1 Ng4 Black's pieces are flowing smoothly around the board spelling trouble for White. 16 Re1 (16 Be1 Bxc3 17 bxc3 Re2 is better for Black) 16...Nxf2+ 17 Kc2 Bd3+ 18 Kb3 Rb8 19 Ne5 Bc5+ 20 Ka4 Rb4+ 21 Ka3 Rxd4+ 22 Kb3 Rb8+ 0-1. **4...fxe4** Or 4...exd4 5 Nxd4 fxe4 6 Nxc6 bxc6 7 Qh5+ g6 8 Qe5+ Qe7 9 Qxh8 and the game was effectively over in K.Kiik-L.Linden, Helsinki 1999. **5 Nxe5 Nf6 6 Bg5** If we step into the time machine then we can see 6 Be2 being tried in K.Leffmann-S.Winawer, Leipzig 1877, 6...Bb4 7 a3 Bxc3+ 8 bxc3 Ne7 9 Bg5 0-0 10 0-0 h6 11 Bxf6 gxf6 12 Nc4 d5 13 Ne3 f5 14 f4 Kh7 15 Kh1 Rg8 16 Qe1 Qd6 17 g3 Be6 18 Bh5 c5 when Black had an edge. **6...Bb4 7 a3 7 Bc4!**? encourages 7...d5 which is fine for Black upon 8 Bxf6 Qxf6 (8...gxf6 9 Qh5+ wins) 9 Bxd5 Nxe5 10 dxe5 Qxe5 11 0-0 c6 12 Bxe4 0-0 13 Qd3 Bd6 14 g3 Bc5 15 Rae1 Kh8 ½-½ A.Martin Gonzalez-R.Vera, Malaga 1981. Also interesting is 7 Bb5 when 7...Qe7 (7...0-0 offers equal chances) 8 Bxc6 bxc6 9 0-0 Bxc3 10 bxc3 0-0 11 Qe2 Qe6 12 f4 exf3 13 Qxf3 Ba6 14 Rfe1 led to a level position in K.Stead-L.Forace, Melbourne 2002. **7...Bxc3+ 8 bxc3 0-0 9 Ng4 d5 10 Nxf6+ gxf6 11 Bh6 Rf7 12 g4?!**



White has to be congratulated on his desire to attack but I think a little more patience is required. 12 Be2 intending to castle kingside is a decent alternative. **12...Kh8 13 Be2 Be6 14 Qd2** The problem for White is what to do with his king. This is because in the

centre it is vulnerable and makes it difficult to co-ordinate the rooks. **14...Qd6 15 Bf4 Qd7 16 h3 Ne7 17 Qe3 Ng6 18 Bg3 Rc8 19 Kd2** An indication that things have not turned out as White hoped when he played 12 g4. **19...b6 20 Ba6 Rd8 21 Rhe1 c5 22 f4 f5 23 Be2?** 23 g5 is necessary when 23...cxd4 24 Qxd4+ Kg8 offers Black the brighter prospects. **23...fxg4 24 hxg4 Bxg4** Flitney is a pawn up but more importantly White's position buckles under the strain of protecting his king. **25 dxc5 bxc5 26 Rf1 d4 27 cxd4 Bxe2 28 Kxe2 Qg4+ 29 Ke1 cxd4 30 Qe2 0-1**

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