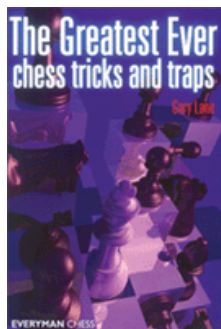




COLUMNISTS

Opening Lanes

Gary Lane



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Forgot Me Not

There is something to admire about players who play something unusual in the opening, so why not try something different on move two. The problem is that if you have your own innovation prepared for around move twelve, the opponent normally plays something different before you get the chance to hoodwink them.

If you are playing on the Internet or a weekend tournament with a fast time limit that would stop White thinking up a good response, then the following opening might be one worth taking seriously. **Lev Zilbermintz** from the **USA** writes, "I would like to know more about the line 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nf6!?, the Marshall Defence. Now if 3 Nc3, we have a good old fashioned Queen's Gambit. However, what happens if White does not play 3 Nc3, but 3 cxd5 instead? Here 3...Nxd5 4 e4 gives White an edge, and might transpose to the Grünfeld Defence. But why should Black be so cooperative? In fact, instead of 3...Nd5, I have seen 3...b6 and 3...e6. What do you think of 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nf6!? 3 cxd5 b5!?, which I call the Flank Gambit? I have played it on the Internet countless times and won with it! I invented this line a few years ago, but it has been confined exclusively to ICC. Still, I beat some titled players with it, some in as little as eight moves! Your opinion?"

It is certainly an unusual line, but it does save yourself from having to remember endless lines of theory in the Queen's Gambit or the Slav. As a surprise weapon it has many pluses, especially because it will make the average player start making his own decisions from move three. Yet before we throw out our 1 d4 books, here is a strong player playing white who demonstrates that the main line for Black is not perfect:

Adly, Ahmed (2568)-Sarwat Walaa (2388)

Arcapita Manama 2009

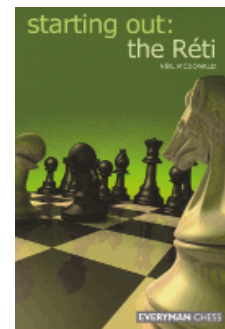
Queen's Pawn [D06]

1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nf6!?

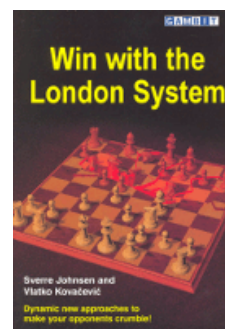


This is known as the Marshall Defence and is generally regarded as a dubious variation. I am no chess historian, but I assume it is named after the great American player Frank Marshall (1877–1944). Nowadays, with computers, new ideas in forgotten lines are always cropping up, so perhaps there is room for improvement in some lines. **3 cxd5 Nxd5** This has to be considered the main line because Black regains the pawn. The snag is that it allows White to create an unhindered pawn centre. The big difference compared to the Grünfeld is that after 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 exd5 5 e4, Black exchange his knight with 5...Nxc3 and after 6 bxc3, Black can chip away against the centre. **4 e4 Nb6** Also possible is 4...Nf6 to put the e4-pawn under pressure. I tracked a couple of games by chess star Topalov when he took it on in some simultaneous games: 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 and now a) 6...Bb4 7 Bd3 defending the

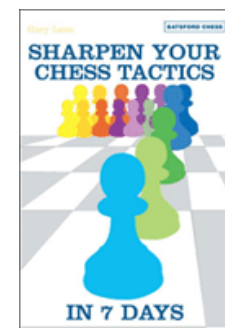
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e-pawn and White has an obvious plan of castling kingside and pinning the knight with Bg5 7...0-0 8 0-0 c6 9 Bg5 Be7 if this is best, then it highlights the folly of 6...Bb4, which effectively wasted a move 10 Qc2 the obvious threat is 11 e5 to force the knight to move leaving the h7-pawn vulnerable 10...Nfd7 11 Bf4 c5 12 d5 Nf6 13 d6! Bxd6 14 Bxd6 Qxd6 15 e5 Qe7 16 exf6 Qxf6 17 Bxh7+ Kh8 18 Be4 led to a winning position in V.Topalov-H. Pollmann, Frankfurt simul 1997. b) 6...Be7 7 Be2 (one of the advantages of the bishop being on e2 rather than d3 is that it gives White the option of meeting a future ...c5 with d4-d5) 7..0-0 8 0-0 Nbd7 9 Be3 (now that there is a bishop already on e7, Topalov feels no need to place the bishop on g5 and instead steadily develops allowing his simul opponent the chance to go wrong by not facing any forcing moves) 9...b6 10 e5 Ne8 11 Qc2 Bb7 12 Rad1 f5? (the logic is clear because Black is wary of allowing a white knight to occupy the e4-square and stop any tactics aimed at the h7-square. In reality there is a big flaw and not surprisingly Topalov finds it) 13 Bc4! c6 14 Bxe6+ Kh8 15 Bxf5 led to a clear advantage in V.Topalov-A.Auslaender, Frankfurt simul 1997. **5 Bf4** This has hardly been played, but Adly knew that his opponent preferred to play this variation coupled with a kingside fianchetto. I think Black should accept the change in circumstances and try 5...e6, intending ...Bd6, which is passive, but better than the game. Another example is V. Topalov-J.Gonzalez, Tenerife simul 1997 that saw a slightly different approach with 5 Nc3. That game went 5...g6 6 h3 Bg7 7 Nf3 0-0 (or 7...N8d7 8 Be3 0-0 9 Be2 aiming to castle kingside with a slight edge thanks to the pawn centre) 8 Be2 e6 9 0-0 Nc6 10 Bg5 Qd7 11 a3? When you are playing over twenty opponents in a simul the master can go wrong! I suspect that 11 Be3 to preserve the d-pawn looks fine and makes the queen on d7 look awkwardly placed when 11...f5 is met by 12 exf5 exf5 13 Qb3+ Kh8 14 d5 favouring White) 11...Nxd4 12 Nxd4 Bxd4 13 Nd5 exd5 14 Qxd4 dxe4 15 Qxe4 Re8 16 Qf3 Qf5 with an ending beckoning and White is a pawn down, but eventually Topalov did win. **5...g6 6 Be5!?**



This is a good, practical decision because Black will be used to having a bishop on g7 striking at the pawn on d4, which will no longer be possible. If the rook moves, then Black has conceded kingside castling rights, while blocking with the f-pawn will mean that White has succeeded in getting him out of the book. Instead 6 Nf3 Bg7 7 Nc3 looks like a decent alternative with the slightly better prospects. **6...f6 7 Bg3 c6 8 Nc3 Be6 9 h4** The Egyptian grandmaster is known for his attacking prowess and wastes no time in setting Black fresh problems. **9...h5** Sarwat is understandably wary of the advance h4-h5 and puts a stop to it. Even so, 9...Bh6 is worth considering when 10 h5 is met by 10...Nc4 with interesting play. **10 Nf3 Bh6 11 Qc2 N8d7** Or 11...0-0 12 Be2, intending to castle kingside, slightly favours White whose pieces are better co-ordinated. **12 a4 a5 13 d5** A little trick to create problems for Black, which is based on the discovered attack on the pawn on g6 if there are multiple exchanges on d5. **13...Bf7** Or 13...cxd5 14 exd5 Nxd5 15 Nxd5 Bxd5 16 Rd1! and if the bishop moves then Bb5 can be good or even Qxg6+. **14 Nd4** The knight is well placed to attack the c6-pawn and contemplate Ne6 at the right time, which prompts Black to be more decisive before being outclassed. **14...cxd5** I wanted to try 14...Ne5, but 15 Rd1 maintains White's initiative. **15 exd5 Nxd5 16 Nxd5 Bxd5 17 Qxg6+ Bf7 18 Qf5** I can't see Black being happy with such a position, having played 2...Nf6 to upset White. After all it is Sarwat who has to watch out for impending tactical tricks. **18...Qb6** Of course 18...0-0? walks into checkmate after 19 Bd3 when the threat of Qh7 is lethal. **19 Nb5**



19...e5 20 Rd1 It is straightforward to threaten Nd6+, but sometimes you need to take advantage of concessions rather than look for a star knock-out move. 20 Be2, intending to castle kingside, looks fine when Black will have to risk castling queenside. **20...Be6** It looks outrageous, but maybe 20...0-0-0! is worth a punt if only because White lags in kingside development, so he does not have the perfect attack lined up. For instance, 21 Nd6+ Kb8 22 Nxf7 fails to convince upon (22 Bb5! is probably best to try and control the position, but compared to the actual game this is what Black wants from his opening because it is a tactical mess!) 22...Qb4+ 23 Ke2 Qxb2+ 24 Ke1 (24 Kf3 Qb3+ 25 Bd3 Qxf7 results in a sharp position where white's king is poorly placed) 24...Qb4+ 25 Ke2 Qb2+ heading for a draw by repetition. **21 Qxh5+ Ke7 22 Qf3** The queen has done its job of preventing Black from castling so now retreats to avoid the threat of discovered attack with ...Bd2+. **22...Qc5 23 Be2??** Adly wants to catch up on his development, but this is wrong. 23 Nc3! is the top move making way for b5 to be occupied by the bishop and adding in the option of Ne4. For example, a) 23...Rh8 24 Bb5 Nb6 25 Qxb7+ and Black can go home. b) 23...Qb4 24 Bb5 Qxb2? 25 Bxd7 Bxd7 26 Nd5+ Ke8 27 Nxf6+ winning. **23...Qb4+ 24 Kf1 Nc5 25 Kg1 Qxb2** Black restores material equality. The position is roughly equal with precise play, although in practical terms the black king remains more vulnerable in the long-term. **26 Kh2 Qb3 27 Nc3 Rad8!?** I prefer 27...Rac8 to put some pressure on the knight and stop White being able to easily manoeuvre his pieces. For example, 28 Rb1 Qc2 29 Rb5 Bd2! with equal opportunities. **28 Rxd8 Rxd8 29 Rb1 Qc2 30 Rb5!** The one thing you notice about Adly's strong play is how he constantly poses Black problems to solve. **30...Rc8 31 Rxc5 Rxc5 32 Ne4 f5** 32...Rd5 allows 33 Qxf6+ Kd7 34 Bf3 Bf4 35 Bxf4 exf4 36 Qf8 with a terrific attack. **33 Nxc5 Qxc5 34 Qxb7+ Kf6 35 h5!**



A great move which puts Black under pressure in a seemingly docile position by threatening Qh7 and Bh4+ at the right moment. **35...Bg5** Black has serious problems: a) 35...Qc3 36 Bh4+ Bg5 37 Bxg5+ Kxg5 38 Qe7+ winning. b) 35...Bf7 36 Qb8! Qd4 37 Qh8+ Bg7 38 Qh7 with ideas such as h6 or even f4 to cut off the black queen from controlling the h4-square allowing the white bishop to make a strong check. **36 Qh7 Bf7 37 Qh8+ Ke6** Or 37...Ke7 38 Qxe5+ Qxe5 39 Bxe5 leads to a winning endgame. **38 Bc4+!**



A nice way to deflect the black queen from its defensive duties of looking after the e5-pawn. **38...Qxc4 39 Qxe5+ Kd7 40 Qxf5+ Ke8 41 Qxg5** Adly has regained his piece with interest and is now well placed to shepherd his h-pawn onwards. **41...Qxa4 42 Qe5+ Kd7 43 Qd6+ Ke8 44 Qe5+ Kf8 45 h6 Qc2 46 Qg7+ 1-0**

It is not easy to find top class players having to cope with the opening, so sometimes the results look better for Black merely because White is low-rated. I was impressed by the following game, which admittedly was from a simultaneous display. Still, white was the World Champion at the time.

Alekhine, Alexander - Manning, John

Washington DC simul, 1933

Queen's Pawn [D06]

1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nf6 3 cxd5 e6!? A gambit to create some active play can be a good idea in a simultaneous display because the master has a limited time at each board and is probably competing against at least twenty players. The move would also have shock value on the Internet when White is confronted with something new on the third move. It is similar to the line in the Scandinavian which arises after 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 c4 e6. However, I think with ample time White should be able to repel Black's momentum and remain a pawn up. The reader Mr. Zilbermintz is renowned for coming up with intriguing ideas in the opening and his suggestion of 3...b5 is interesting. In this case I can understand why people are flummoxed when playing quick chess on the Internet because it looks odd. I think it is a fun move and as Mr. Zilbermintz has called it the Flank Gambit, it is time to keep a close eye on it. I reckon after 3...b5?!



White should try 4 Nc3. For example, a) when 4...b4 to avoid capture allows 5 Qa4+ with strong play in view of 5...c6 6 Qxb4 and now if 6...e5 which looks sharp, but with time can be easily rebuffed by the safe 7 Qa4 with advantage to White. b) 4...c6 5 Qb3 (after 5 dxc6, White wins a pawn, but Black does get some play although after 5...b4 6 Na4 Nxc6 7 Nf3 Bg4 8 Nc5 Bxf3 9 exf3 Qxd4 10 Qc2 with the superior chances) 5...Nxd5 6 Nf3 is a little better for White. Maybe 3...b6 is less likely to lose a pawn, but White has no worries. A sample line runs 4 Nf3 Bb7 5 Ne5 Bxd5 6 Qa4+ c6 7 Nc3 e6 8 f3, intending e2-e4, when the bishop on d5 looks misplaced giving White an edge. **4 dxe6 Bxe6 5 Nc3 Bb4 6 Nf3**



Alekhine is adopting the sensible approach of simply developing rather than trying to refute Black's gambit. **6...0-0 7 Bg5 h6 8 Bh4 Bf5** I prefer **8...Nc6. 9 e3 Nbd7 10 Bd3 Bxd3 11 Qxd3 Re8 12 0-0** White has managed to emerge from the opening unscathed and it is time to count the pawns. **12...Bxc3 13 bxc3 Re6 14 Rab1 b6 15 c4 Nc5 16 Qc2 Nce4 17 d5** The pawn advances, but its main role is to free up the central square d4 for the benefit of White's knight. **17...Rd6 18 Nd4 Nc5 19 f3 Qe8 20 e4 Nh5 21 Bg3 Nxg3 22 hxg3 Qe5 23 Nc6**



23...Rxc6 Black gives up the exchange in a difficult position as a ploy to last a few more moves. Also possible is **23...Qxg3 24 Ne7+ Kh8 25 Nf5** forks the queen and rook or **23...Qe8 24 Qc3**, intending e4-e5, looks like grim news for Black. **24 dxc6 Qxg3 25 Rfd1 Re8 26 Qf2 Qg6 27 Rd5 Qxc6 28 Rbd1 Ne6 29 f4?** There is no real reason for giving away the c-pawn, but I suspect White just wanted to start attacking and finish off his opponent. Instead **29 Qc2** maintains White's advantage. **29...Qxc4 30 Qe3 c5 31 Rd7 Qxa2 32 R1d6 c4 33 e5 Nc5 34 Rd8 Rxd8 35 Rxd8+ Kh7 36 Kh2**



36...Ne6? The folly of giving away the queenside pawns might have been exploited by **36...Qb3**, but it was a simultaneous display so such games inevitably have their ups and downs. **37 Qe4+ 1-0** Black politely resigned in view of **37...g6** being met by **38 Rd7** when **38...Kg8** is well met by **39 f5**.

Mr. A. Solis from the **USA** got me thinking about openings with his interesting question: "I am about a 1200 player on the Internet and have been playing around with openings to find the best one for me. I play the Colle Zukertort and Scotch as white. As black I play the Caro-Kann, Slav, Scandinavian and recently tried the poisoned pawn versions of the Sicilian and French. Out of all these, what do you prefer as white and also black?"

I am very impressed you play such a diverse group of openings. Of course, on the Internet it is possible to play fifteen games of the Caro-Kann, get bored, and try your luck with a Sicilian. As long as you have fun, then "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" and keep on playing such openings. However, if you are looking to increase your results on the Internet and even in the occasional tournament, then it is best to decide the right openings for you and stick with them. That way if you play twenty games with the same variation on the Internet, then you will gain valuable experience with the opening. You might fall for the occasional trick, but at least that means you will be alert to the danger by the time you come to play tournament chess face to face with an opponent. Normally, if I was coaching someone I would look at their games and give some advice about which openings to take a closer look at in the future. Well, the Scotch (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4) is a good opening that continues to catch people out because people are more prepared for the Ruy Lopez. It was revived by Garry Kasparov in the 1990s and recently the Norwegian star Magnus Carlsen has been playing it with success, which means it gets a big thumbs up. I have also written a book about it and I suggested lines suitable for club players, which helps White to avoid learning a mass of moves in the main lines. The only snag with playing 1 e4 that you have to contend with the Sicilian and all the other openings. Sometimes, a good opening repertoire book or DVD can plug the gaps there. As you have limited time to study, then the Colle is a sound choice with a reputation for solid play, but with chances of a kingside attack. The Colle-Zukertort (1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 e3 e6 4 Bd3 c5 5 b3) is the sort of opening that is ideal for players who don't want to worry about the latest move from Linares upsetting a complicated variation. After all, White can play his set-up against just about anything Black wants as long as he plays 1...d5. As black against 1 e4, the Sicilian is a good way to play for a win, but requires lots of work learning the best moves; otherwise, you can be lost within twelve moves on a regular basis. The Scandinavian is a good choice for those with little time to pour over their opening books. I would suggest the line 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 and now 3...Qd6 for something a little bit different. The French and Caro-Kann are reliable alternatives and you will find repertoire books on both openings where the author helps you out by suggesting certain lines.

I hope this has been of some help, but if other readers want to take a look at their opening repertoire, then send in a few games so I can get a feel for your type of plan and try and determine for instance if you like positional or attacking play.

Munkhtulga Khatnbaatar from the USA writes, "I am learning the London system, but encountered a little problem after 1 d4 d5 2 Bf4 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nh5. What should I do in this instance? Should I cede the dark-squared bishop?"

At first I thought 3...Nh5 is just a waste of time and sure enough some players who tried it were doing so just because they did not know what to do. Then again, some good players have also tested it with a view to try and make White avoid his favourite opening line. I think it should be harmless for White, but you just have to reassess the position and play a quick c2-c4 at some point. Here is one example that should encourage you:

Finegold, Ronald-Burg, D

Motor City op,1985

London System [D02]

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 d4 d5 3 Bf4 This is the move that signals the London System.
3...Nh5!?



4 Bg2 The bishop retreats to avoid capture and the hope is to show that the knight on the edge of the board is poorly located. I suspect it is a good, practical choice because it at least stops Black from easily trading knight for bishop and he will now have to think of a plan. Also possible is a) There is nothing seriously wrong with 4 Bg3, but I just think Black will be happier to shift the position into new territory than White: a1) 4...Nxg3 5 hxg3 c5 6 e3 e6 7 c3 this pawn set-up is found in the Colle and the London System with the emphasis being on keeping things safe by stopping Black from seriously disrupting the pawn structure. 7...Nc6 8 Nbd2 Be7 9 Bd3 h6 10 Qe2 a6 11 dxc5 Bxc5 12 e4 Be7 13 e5 ½-½, T.Kober-T.Hommeles, German Team Championship 2006.) a2) 4...c5 5 Bxb8 Rxb8 6 e3 a6 7 dxc5 Qa5+ 8 Nc3 e6 9 Qd4 Qc7 10 Be2 (I prefer 10 Na4 when 10...Bd7 is obvious and a sample line runs 11 Bd3 Rc8 12 g4! Nf6 13 g5 Nh5 14 Qh4 g6 15 Nb6 with the advantage) 10...Bxc5 11 Qe5 Qxe5 12 Nxe5 Nf6 13 Nd3 Ba7 14 0-0 Ke7 when Black has a slight edge thanks to the bishop-pair in the ending and White's passive pieces, B.Latas- -R.Antoniewski, Wysowa 2007. b) 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bc1 (5 Bh4 g5 6 Bg3 Bg7, intending to take on g3 at the right moment is roughly equal) 5...g5 6 c4 c6 7 Nc3 f5 8 Ne5! Nf6 9 e3 Bg7 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 Bb5+ Kf8 (11...Nbd7 allows the trick 12 Nxd5 when 12...Nxd5?? allows checkmate upon 13 Qh5+ Kf8 14 Qf7 checkmate) 12 Ng6+ Kf7 13 Nxh8+ Bxh8 14 0-0 it is time for Black to count the pieces and start checking his train schedule to go home, K. Hulak-G.Laco, Pula 2002. c) 4 Bc1 has done well for people who follow up with c2-c4 and Black always seems to have problems with the knight stuck on h5. But why can't Black just play 3...Nf6 and look at White with a smile on their face? **4...g6** Black opts for a kingside fianchetto, Also possible is a) 4...c6 5 c4 dxc4 6 e3 e6 (or 6...b5 7 a4 a6 8 axb5 cxb5 9 b3 cxb3?! 10 Ne5 Nf6 11 Bxb5+ winning) 7 Bxc4 Nf6 8 Nc3 b5 9 Be2 (9 Bd3!? should be considered) 9...Bb7 10 Qc2 a6 11 a4 led to equal chances in M.Stryjecki T.Markowski, Warsaw 2006. b) 4...Nc6 5 e3 a6 6 c4 Nf6 (the opening now resembles a Chigorin, 1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nc6, except Black has wasted time by moving his king's knight three times already) 7 Nc3 with a slight edge, K.Piastowski A.-Goetz, Bad Homburg 2005. **5 c4 c6 6 Na3** It looks odd, but the logical is that White can take back on c4 with the knight if required. 6 e3 also seems fine when the queen's knight can be deployed to the superior square c3 where it can control more squares. **6...Bg7 7 cxd5 Qxd5**



This is fine, but when someone brings their queen out early it is only natural for White to try and dream up a way to exploit it. Of course, the position is about level, but already Black is playing with some aggression. Instead 7... cxd5 is a safe response. **8 e3** Finegold is just getting ready to develop his kingside by preparing Bc4, which will gain a move by harassing the black queen. **8...0-0 9 h3** I can only guess this was the start of a brilliant plan to

trick his opponent and lure him into a trap. The reality probably is that White wanted to stop the pin ...Bg4. **9...c5 10 Bc4 Qe4?! One** has to admire Burg for wanting to use his queen to apply pressure, but in this position is a bit early for such things. He should be more cautious and try 10...Qd8. **11 Qb3**



11...h6? Black reacts to the pressure against the f7-pawn by cancelling out a white knight safely landing on the g5-square. It is understandable when White was threatening 12 Bxf7+ Rxf7 13 Qxf7+ Kxf7 14 Ng5+ with advantage, but he has missed something else. Perhaps 11...Nf6 is best because it avoids the obvious tactics: 12 Bxf7+?! (12 Ng5? runs into 12...Qxg2) 12...Rxf7 13 Qxf7 + Kxf7 14 Ng5+ Kg8 15 Nxe4 Nxe4 and Black is better. **12 Bd5** Oops! The black queen is embarrassed, because the only safe escape square leads to a loss of material. **12...Qf5 13 g4 1-0**



Opening Lanes is based 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 your full name and country of residence please) and perhaps Gary will reply in his next ChessCafe.com column...

[Yes, I have a question for Gary!](#)

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