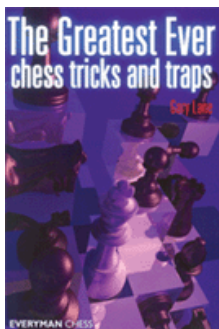




COLUMNISTS

Opening Lanes

Gary Lane



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The Secret

If you have limited time to study, there is alternative to the ritual of learning numerous opening moves. The world of Irregular Openings offers something completely different and a chance for you to become an expert of the line.

Tom Merrill from the **USA** wants to share his secret opening. He writes, "I was wondering if you have any thoughts on Irregular Openings? In particular 1 b4, which is known as the Sokolsky Opening (aka Orangutan; Polish). I joined a local chess club as a novice and spent the first few months being trounced by the more seasoned players. I tried following Fischer's advice about 1 e4 being the best first move and kept getting bested by my fellow patzers. Then I studied up a bit on Bird's Opening (1 f4) and won my first match. It threw my opponent off just enough to give me the edge. I moved on from there to use 1 b4 with similar results. My results against the online computers also vastly improves when I begin with an irregular opening such as 1 b4, instead of 1 e4 or 1 d4. I know that Irregular Openings are discouraged in chess literature; but, as a newcomer to chess, these openings have provided me with a fighting chance in the opening and gotten me at least to the chaotic middlegame phase against more experienced players not familiar with these openings. 1 b4 seems sound to me if you take advantage of 2 Bb2 and begin controlling the center via a1-g8 diagonal. Bent Larsen seemed to have success using the more Irregular Openings."

There is a good reason why an opening such as 1 b4 is described as irregular, because not many people play it. This does not mean it should be dismissed, since if you become an expert on the line, you can have lots of fun and have completely different positions on the board in almost every game. It has been said that if you follow the main lines, you will score higher results. I would agree with that, but you also need plenty of time to learn all the lines. Even then, many players get restless trotting out the Ruy Lopez every game, especially now that Black has so many replies. If you play something different in the opening, then Black maybe will only come up against it once or twice in a year. The difference being that, as white, you hopefully become an expert having to play it week after week.

The following game sees a FIDE Master reaching a new and interesting position after several moves.

Eric Teichmann - Hilton Bennett

Doeberl Cup Canberra 2010

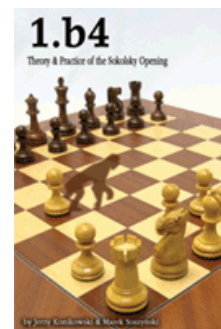
Irregular Opening [A00]

1 b4 c5



[FEN "rnbqkbnr/pp1ppppp/8/2p5/1P6/8/P1PPPPPP/RNBQKBNR w KQkq c6 0 2"]

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1.b4

by Jerzy Konikowski
& Marek Soszynski



Bird's Opening

by Timothy Taylor



Secrets of Opening Surprises

by Jeroen Bosch

A direct approach to challenge White's opening from move one. **2 bxc5 e5** The bishop is poised to capture on c5 and the advance of the e-pawn is designed to fight for the control of the centre. Instead, 2...Qa5 was tested in the game K.Novikov-V.Zhukov, Tula 2007: 3 Nf3 Qxc5 4 e3 Nc6 5 c4 (the position resembles an English Opening where the queen on c5 looks misplaced, because it is an easy target for White) 5...Qa5 6 Bb2 d6 7 Nc3 Nf6 8 h3 e5 9 Be2 Be7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Qc2 h6 12 Rfd1 Re8 13 a4 a6 14 d3 with equal chances. **3 e4!?** A little bit unusual by White who is seeking to steer the game towards positions associated with 1 e4 e5. White cannot prove an advantage in such positions, but, of course, it does mean Black will have to think for himself rather than rely on standard moves. The normal response is 3 e3, when after 3...Bxc5 play might proceed a) 4 d4 exd4 5 exd4 Be7 6 Nf3 Nf6 7 Bd3 (White has an unusual position on the board after several moves, but the position is level) 7...0-0 8 0-0 d5 9 h3 Nc6 10 Re1 led to equal chances in E.Vasiukov-H.Hecht, Dresden 2010. b) 4 c4 Nc6 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 Nge2 (or 6 d3 d5 7 cxd5 Nxd5 favours Black) 6...0-0 7 Nd5 d6 8 Nec3 Be6 (perhaps 8...Nb4!? is worth considering) 9 Be2 Bxd5 10 cxd5 Ne7 11 Qb3 Qa5 12 Rb1 gave White a slight edge in A. Sitnikov-V.Aveskulov, Kharkov 2005. By the way, there might be some who want to hang on to the extra pawn, but 3 Ba3 does not do the job, as one option for Black is 3...Qa5, and the material level will soon be restored. **3...Bxc5 4 Bc4** White targets the f7-pawn and the plan for White is develop and castle. **4...Nf6 5 Nc3 0-0 6 Nf3 Nc6** At junior tournaments, I often see moves such as 6...Ng4 to attack the f2-pawn, but 7 0-0 is a good reply, when 7...Bxf2+ 8 Rxf2 Nxf2 9 Kxf2 favours White because the two pieces exert more control on the position compared to Black's extra rook. 7 0-0 a6 The idea of advancing the queenside pawns is fine, but I also like the simple 7...d6, when 8 Bb2 Be6 cancels out the pressure against the f7-pawn leaving White with a slight plus. **8 d3 b5 9 Bb3 h6 10 Be3**



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/3p1pp1/p1n2n1p/1pb1p3/4P3/1BNPBN2/P1P2PPP/R2Q1RK1 b - - 0 10"]

White is doing the sensible thing and not panicking. Yes, the position is equal, but ten moves is not a lot and there is plenty to play for, so he just carries on getting his pieces out. **10...d6 11 h3 Bb7 12 Qe1 Rc8 13 Ne2** Teichmann wants to keep Black working hard to defend accurately and now embarks on a knight tour with the aim to manoeuvre it via g3 to f5. **13...Qb6 14 Ng3 Nd4 14...Ne7** to cover the f5-square offers equal opportunities. **15 Bxd4 Bxd4 16 Nxd4**



[FEN "2r2rk1/1b3pp1/pq1p1n1p/1p2p3/3NP3/1B1P2NP/P1P2PP1/R3QRK1 b - - 0 16"]

16...Qxd4? The urge to avoid doubled d-pawns with 16...exd4 leads to

instant problems. **17 Nf5!** The folly of Black's previous move is rudely exposed, because the knight attacks the black queen and is poised to impose a deadly fork with Ne7+. **17...Qb6 18 Ne7+ Kh8 19 Nxc8 Bxc8 20 Qe3** White is the exchange up, so is more than happy to exchange queens and enter a relatively simple won ending. **20...Qd8 21 f4 Nh5 22 f5** White is on top and takes no risks. However, the thought of a knight being posted on f4 is hardly a worry, so 22 fxe5 deserves serious consideration, when 22...dxe5 23 Rxf7 Nf4 24 Qc5 is heavily in White's favour. **22...Nf4 23 Kh2 Qf6 24 g3 Nh5 25 a4 b4 26 a5 Bb7** Instead, 26...Bd7 to stop the rook coming to a4 is not much help after 27 Bc4, when 27...Ra8 28 Rab1 will win a pawn. **27 Ra4 d5** The position is completely lost, but Black rightly makes sure that White knows exactly what he is doing before giving up. **28 Rxb4 Bc6 29 Rb6 d4** Or 29...dxe4 30 dxe4 when the pinned bishop on c6 is a cause of concern for Black. **30 Qf3 g6 31 fxe6 Qxe6 32 Qg4 1-0**

Here the Englishman records a victory with 1 b4:

Eric Teichmann-Yu Chen Peng

Sydney International Open 2010

Irregular Opening [A00]

1 b4 c6 2 c4 White stakes a claim for control of the centre. Or 2 Bb2 Qb6 3 a3 a5 4 Nf3 axb4 5 axb4 Rxa1 6 Bxa1 Qxb4 Black is a pawn up, but lags behind in development. Still, White has it all to prove. 7 e3 d5 8 Bc3 Qb6 9 Be2 Nf6 10 d3 Bg4 11 0-0 Nbd2 e6 13 Qa1 Qc7 14 Rb1 b5?! (14...Qb8 is the safe and steady response) 15 Qa8+ Ke7? (15...Nb8 might not be perfect, but keeps the game going as a competitive battle) 16 Nd4! Bxe2 17 Nxc6+ Kd6 18 Nd4 Bxd3 19 cxd3 1-0 B.Tonkov-D.Dimitrov, Dimitrovgrad 2009 **2...d5 3 e3 e5 4 Bb2 Nd7** Instead, 4...Bd6 was tried in the game V.Hort-P.Gruen, German Team Championship 1983: 5 Qb3!? (5 Nf3 looks like a decent reply maintaining a slight plus) 5...Nf6 6 Na3 0-0 7 Be2 a5 8 cxd5 axb4 9 Nc4 Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Na6 11 Ngf3 Nc5 12 Qc2 Be6 gave Black a slight initiative. **5 b5 Ngf6 6 Nf3 Bd6 7 Nc3**



[FEN "r1bqk2r/pp1n1ppp/2pb1n2/1P1pp3/2P5/2N1PN2/PB1P1PPP/R2QKB1R b KQkq - 0 7"]

As usual in this opening, White enjoys no obvious advantage, but from seeing his games I have noticed repeatedly that Teichmann enjoys a time advantage in such positions. This is because he has been playing 1 b4 for over twenty-five years, while his opponents are likely to have faced it on a handful of occasions. **7...0-0 8 bxc6 bxc6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 Nb5 Bb8 11 Ba3 Re8 12 Qc2 a6!?** White is happy to exchange a knight on d6, so there is no need to encourage him. A more spirited reply is 12...e4, when 13 Nfd4 Ne5 offers equal opportunities. **13 Nd6 Bxd6 14 Bxd6 Bb7 15 Qb2!?** **Ne4!** After 15...Re6 16 Bxe5 Nxe5 17 Nxe5 Rb6 18 Qd4, White is a safe pawn up. **16 Qxb7 Nxd6 17 Qxd5**



[FEN "r2qr1k1/3n1ppp/p2n4/3Qp3/8/4PN2/P2P1PPP/R3KB1R b KQ - 0 17"]

Teichmann is a pawn up, but he needs a couple of extra moves to catch up on development, because he badly needs to whisk his king away to safety by castling kingside. **17...Nf6 18 Qc6 e4 19 Nd4 Ng4** I like 19...Re5 to activate the rook, because after the obvious 20 Be2, then 20...Rc8 activates the queen's rook, while 21 Qxa6? is terrible because of 21...Ra5! and surprisingly the white queen is trapped. **20 Be2 Ne5 21 Qd5 Qf6 22 0-0** White has achieved his aim of castling and holding on to the extra pawn, so the advantage is definitely with him. **22...Rad8 23 Nc6 Nxc6 24 Qxc6 Re6 25 Qxa6** Two pawns are better than one! It is true that Black still has some decent kingside play, but once it is fended off then the a-pawn will roll forward causing all sorts of trouble for Black. **25...Qh4 26 Qa5 Nb7 27 Qc7 Rh6** Black is just hoping; his threats are tame and the problem of his suspect back rank stop any ideas of ...Rxd2. **28 h3** The pawn on h2 was protected, but understandably White wants to turn his attention to the knight on b7. **28...Nd6 29 Rab1 Rg6**



[FEN "3r2k1/2Q2ppp/3n2r1/8/4p2q/4P2P/P2PBPP1/1R3RK1 w - - 0 30"]

30 Rb8! 1-0

René Torenstra from the **Netherlands** has enjoyed the recent interest in the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit. His email read, "I enjoyed the return to the Blackmar-Diemer, thank you for that. Years ago I was inspired by another column on ChessCafe to pick it up, with horrendous results, but lots of fun. I send you my most violent draw in sixteen moves ever, employing the Qf3 line you discussed back then. Unfortunately, it's not a clean example (10...Rb8? 11 Qxa7?), but we return to the main line with a pawn less. I was so happy to finally be able to play this line to the end that I screwed up and played Kf3 instead of the recommended Kg3, resulting in this beautiful drawing line by the queen sacrifice. We got the prize for the most spectacular game that season, and have both improved significantly since then - but we both remember this game fondly."

The game is rather spectacular and deserves a wider audience. It will be of particular interest to regular readers and BDG followers such as **Giancarlo Federico** from **Italy** and **Guido De Bouver** from **Belgium**.

Here is the game with a terrific finale:

René Torenstra - Jan-Pieter De Vries
Delft 2005

1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 This position can surprisingly be reached via the Scandinavian via the move-order 1 e4 d5 2 d4 dxe4. **3 Nc3 Nf6 4 f3 exf3 5 Nxf3 Bg4**



[FEN "r1qkb1r/ppp1pppp/5n2/8/3P2b1/2N2N2/PPP3PP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 6"]

This line with the bishop pin is known as the Teichmann Defence. **6 h3 Bh5** 6...Bxf3 7 Qxf3 c6 8 Be3 is also possible, when the white plan will be to play Bd3 and castle kingside. **7 g4 Bg6** Not 7...Nxg4? 8 hxg4 Bxg4 in view of 9 Be2 when White will eventually castle queenside with the better game. **8 Ne5!**



[FEN "r1qkb1r/ppp1pppp/5nb1/4N3/3P2P1/2N4P/PPP5/R1BQKB1R b KQkq - 0 8"]

This is the most positive reaction. Both 8 Bg2 and 8 Bc4 are often tested, but I always think 8...Nc6 is a good reply. **8...Nc6** Also possible is a) 8...e6 9 Bg5 (maybe 9 Qf3 deserves more attention) 9...Be7 10 Qf3 (perhaps 10 Bg2 c6 11 Qd2 gives White some play for the pawn) 10...c6 11 0-0-0 (11 Nxg6 hxg6 12 0-0-0 Nd5 13 Bd2 maintains the tension because Black's position looks cramped) 11...Nd5 12 Bxe7 Qxe7 13 Nxg6 hxg6 14 Ne4 Nd7 15 Bc4 b5 16 Bb3 a5 favoured Black, but White eventually won in K.Stead-C.Bennett, Canberra 2009. b) 8...Nbd7 9 Qf3 c6 (if 9...Nxe5? 10 dxe5 Nd7, then 11 e6! is the key move, when 11...fxe6 12 Qxb7 offers White a strong initiative) 10 Nxg6 hxg6 11 g5 Nh5 12 Bc4 e6 13 Rf1 Qe7 14 Be3 when White has compensation for the pawn because of the pressure against f7, G. Jepps-R. Shapland, Weymouth 2008. **9 Qf3** 9 Bb5! looks simple and good. At least the move in the game leads to fireworks. This is the real reason why White plays the BDG, to be involved in spectacular games with pieces flying in all directions. **9...Nxd4 10 Qxb7 Rb8?** An obvious reply, but deeply flawed. 10...c6 11 Bg2 Qc8 12 Bxc6+ Nxc6 13 Qxc6+ Qxc6 14 Nxc6 Bxc2 15 Be3 is roughly equal. **11 Qxa7?** White misses a pretty win with 11 Bb5+ Nxb5 12 Qc6+ Nd7 13 Nxb5 Rc8 14 Bf4 when the prospect of queenside castling should worry Black and 14...Bxc2 fails to stop the rot upon 15 Rh2 Ba4 16 Rd2 and Black should go home. **11...Ra8 12 Qb7 Nxc2+?** Instead, 12...Qc8 is a safe choice. **13 Kf2 Qd4+ 14 Kf3?** This allows an impressive finish, but 14 Kg3 is just excellent for White. **14...Ne1+ 15 Kg3 Qxe5+ 16 Bf4**



[FEN "r3kb1r/1Qp1pppp/5nb1/4q3/5BP1/2N3KP/PP6/R3nB1R b k - 0 16"]

16...Qxc3+!! ½-½ The game was agreed drawn in view of 17 bxc3 Ne4+ 18 Kh2 Nf3+ and the white king cannot escape the checks: 19 Kg2 Nh4+ 20 Kg1 Nf3+ 21 Kg2 Nh4+ 22 Kh2 Nf3+.

The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit is ideal for those who don't want to take their chess too seriously, because White gives away a pawn and with a good defence you never seem to see it again. Then again, in practical terms, the vast majority of players are not good enough to play many accurate defensive moves, allowing White to reap the rewards with a stylish attack.

What other gambits have captured your imagination with good or bad results?

Finally, **Bob Green** from **England** wants to know if there are any opening traps that can still catch out a grandmaster armed with a computer database?

I would answer that it is even more likely nowadays to catch out strong players, because they constantly change their openings in a bid to avoid preparation. This can leave them vulnerable, as learning an opening only from a database is risky, since you do not always notice the transpositions that are possible or even the basic traps. In the next example, England's Olympiad player Gawain Jones rattles out the opening so confidently that his opponent amazingly fails to spot he can win a piece:

Augustin Madan - Gawain Jones

Coulsden 2008

Modern Defense [B06]

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 c3



[FEN "rnbqkbnr/pp1ppp1p/6p1/2p5/4P3/2P2N2/PP1P1PPP/RNBQKB1R b KQkq - 0 3"]

This is slightly unusual because White proposes to enter a c3 Sicilian and normally the c-pawn is advanced on move two. Instead, 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Bg7 usually transposes to the Accelerated Dragon or the main-line Dragon when Jones plays this way. **3...d5 4 exd5 Qxd5** Black should have no worries here because the queen on d5 is fine, as White cannot easily play Nc3 to attack it. The position is well known and assessed as roughly equal although the ...g6 lines have only become fashionable in recent years. **5 d4** The position is usually reached via the c3 Sicilian. For instance, 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 d4 g6 5 Nf3 transposes to the game. **5...Bg7 6 Be3!?** The normal line is 6 Be2 Nh6, but Black fails to notice the difference. **6...cxd4 7 cxd4** I did some

research on this position and I think one of the reasons Black goes wrong is that one can transpose to the position via a variety of ways. This means Black might be mistakenly thinking he is trying some new. For instance, 1 e4 g6 2 d4 Bg7 3 c3 d5 4 exd5 Qxd5 5 Nf3 c5 6 Be3 cxd4 7 cxd4 Nh6 has been played. **7...Nh6?**



[FEN "rnb1k2r/pp2ppbp/6pn/3q4/3P4/4BN2/PP3PPP/RN1QKB1R w KQkq - 0 8"]

8 Nc3? Perhaps we should all check our openings in the future when playing a grandmaster just in case. **8 Qc1!** would provoke a likely resignation. Black must lose a piece because both the bishop on c8 and the knight on h6 are attacked. It has admittedly all been played before, but it just goes to show that even top players can go wrong by rushing the opening moves. Perhaps Black could struggle on with **8...Bg4**, but the final result is never in doubt: **9 Bxh6 Bxh6 10 Qxh6 Bxf3 11 gxf3** and now a) **11...Nc6 12 Bg2 Nxd4 13 0-0 Nxf3+ 14 Kh1 Qg5 15 Qxg5 Nxe5 16 Rc1 0-0 17 Nc3! Rab8 18 Nd5** threatening the e7-pawn and also Rc7 with a big advantage.) b) **11...Qxf3 12 Rg1 Nc6 13 Bb5** followed by Nd2-b3 is very strong. **8...Qa5** The game continued for a whopping sixty-four moves before a draw was agreed, but it could have easily ended on move eight.

I later asked Gawain about this game. He just grinned and shook his head a lot.

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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