



COLUMNISTS

Opening Lanes

Gary Lane

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Fear of the Unknown

A new move appears on the board that you have never seen before: should you frown or smile?

Lindsey Matthews from the **USA** had this problem and he did not quite solve it. He writes, "My question concerns the English opening; in an online correspondence game I was surprised by Black's sixth move: **1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 e4 Bc5 5 Ne5 Ne5 6 d4** and now **6...d5**. I had never seen this before and probably went astray with **7 dxe5** (I lost). I found no games in a database on the Internet and get differing views from different playing programs. What do you think? Is there a way to "punish" Black for this move?"

It is always difficult to face a surprising move in the opening. There are plenty of people who start to panic thinking they have over looked some amazing new game and are about to lose. The thing is that after the game the hapless opponent usually confesses he just didn't know the opening and the new move just turns out to be bad on closer inspection. This is probably what happened in Mr. Matthews case. Admittedly, the new idea does look impressive, but there is normally a very good reason why no one else is plays it. In future when facing a new move at the board just don't touch your pieces for a few minutes and calm down before taking a fresh look at the position. I suspect you will end up smiling a lot more than the occasional frown.

I analysed the latest innovation, which I hope will be of some use:

Analysis

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 e4



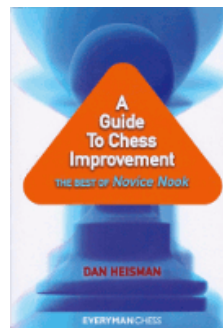
[FEN "r1bqkb1r/pppp1ppp/2n2n2/4p3/2P1P3/2N2N2/PP1P1PPP/R1BQKB1R b KQkq e3 0 4"]

This move does look rather strange in the Four Knights Variation of the English, because it seems to give up the d4-square. However, it is a tried and tested idea to exert extra control over the d5-square. The long-term plan for White, if Black responds passively, is to seek a kingside fianchetto with g2-g3, Bg2 and then 0-0 aiming to break free with a future pawn break f2-f4. **4...Bc5** This attempts to make the most of the a7-g1 diagonal safe in the knowledge that the usual e2-e3 is no longer available in this line. The downside is that White has a way to force exchanges. Instead, **4...Bb4** is a decent alternative. **5 Nxe5 Nxe5** When we first take up the game it is emphasised that we should always castle to keep the king safe, so **5...Bxf2+** seems the perfect riposte. If only chess was that simple. This position is one of the exceptions, mainly because of White's dominating pawn centre upon **6 Kxf2 Nxe5 7 d4** when a sample line runs **7...Nfg4+ 8 Ke1** (or **8 Kg1 Qf6 9 Qd2** also looks good) **8...Qh4+ 9 g3 Qf6 10 Bf4 Qb6 11 Nb5!** with a

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marvellous position for White. **6 d4 d5?!**



[FEN "r1bqk2r/ppp2ppp/5n2/2bpn3/2PPP3/2N5/PP3PPP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq d6 0 7"]

This is the extraordinary position that Mr. Matthews had to contemplate and then find the right continuation. I do not think it is correct compared to other reasonable moves available to Black, but it would surely be a practical reply on the Internet where White would waste time marvelling at the idea. It is worth noting one of the alternatives, which will influence our choice of how to respond. After 6...Bb4 7 dxe5 Nxe4, White can continue a) 8 Qd3 Nxc3 9 bxc3 Ba5 (the defensive 9...Be7 is well met by 10 Qg3 because 10...0-0 runs into 11 Bh6 winning) 10 Ba3 (10 Qg3 is not considered effective in view of 10...Qe7!) 10...Qg5 11 Qd4 (maybe 11 g3 can be considered in view of 11...Qxe5+? leading to disaster upon 12 Kd2 when the threat of Re1+ is lethal) 11...d6!? a well known idea in this line to facilitate kingside castling 12 exd6 0-0 13 Bd3 (13 d7? looks impressive, but White has such bad development that 13...Rd8! is possible when 14 dxc8Q Raxc8 wins) 13...Re8+ 14 Kf1 cxd6 15 h4 Qh6 16 Bxd6 Bxc3 17 Qxc3 Qxd6 gave Black the initiative in D. Poldauf-V.Babula, Bremen 2010. b) 8 Qd4 Nxc3 9 bxc3 Ba5 10 Ba3 d6 (10...b6!? 11 e6 Qf6 is equal) 11 exd6 0-0 12 0-0 cxd6 13 Qxd6 Qxd6 14 Bxd6 Re8 15 Kb2 Bd7 16 Bd3 Bc6 17 f3 Re6 18 c5 Rae8 gave White a slight plus in the game V.Kortchnoi-R.Huebner, Solingen 1973. c) Qf3 d5 9 Be2 Be6?! (I prefer 9...Qe7 with roughly equal chances) 10 0-0 Bxc3 11 bxc3 c6 12 cxd5 Qxd5 occurred in the encounter V.Bhat-T.Sachdev, Caleta 2010 when instead of 13 Bf4 f5 14 Rab1 0-0-0 with equal chances, White should prefer 13 Rb1! gaining the initiative, because if Black carries on in a similar fashion to the main game, then 13...0-0-0 comes under close scrutiny in view of 14 Qe3! when the obvious way to defend the a7-pawn with 14...Kb8 leads to ruin after 15 Bf3 Bf5 16 Rb4 and Black can start thinking about the next game after his loss. **7 dxe5?!** This is just an error and is exactly what Black wants. White's best choice is 7 cxd5! when the obvious line 7...Bb4 (probably 7...Bd6 is arguably the sensible choice, but 8 dxe5 Bxe5 9 f3 leaves Black just a pawn down) 8 dxe5



[FEN "r1bqk2r/ppp2ppp/5n2/3PP3/1b2P3/2N5/PP3PPP/R1BQKB1R b KQkq - 0 8"]

8...Nxe4? is soon revealed to be completely different from the note to Black's sixth move in view of 9 Qa4+ winning the bishop. **7...Nxe4 8 Nxe4 dxe4 9 Qd5!?** In a potentially awkward position this is the best choice to avoid a long tough defence. Or 9 Qxd8+ Kxd8 10 Bf4 Ke7 intending ...Be6 when the black plan is to transfer a rook to the d-file and find the right moment to put his bishop on d4 ensuring the slightly superior chances. The chance to keep the queens on the board should be rejected because of the simple 9 Qc2?! This

almost invites 9...Bf5 when Black can develop smoothly and after 10 g3 Qd7 the menace of the discovered attack with ...e4-e3 gives White considerable cause for concern. **9...Qxd5 10 cxd5 Bd4 11 Bf4 Bxb2** Or 11...Bd7 12 Rc1 c6 is about level. **12 Rb1 Bc3+**



[FEN "r1b1k2r/ppp2ppp/8/3PP3/4pB2/2b5/P4PPP/1R2KB1R w Kkq - 0 13"]

13 Ke2 This leads to a complicated position because White is about to play Ke2-e3 with drawing chances, but I can't help thinking that in a normal game White will struggle to find the perfect moves required to justify being a pawn down.

I assume that Mr. Matthews will adopt the improvement 7 cxd5, so we will now need to know the latest news about the mainline:

Andrew Lewis – Peter Williams

Sunningdale 2010

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 e4 Bc5 5 Nxe5 Nxe5 6 d4 Bxd4 Instead, 6...Bb4 is a main alternative and was mentioned in the previous analysis. Also possible is a) 6...Nxe4 7 Nxe4 Bb4+ 8 Bd2 Bxd2+ 9 Qxd2 Ng6 10 0-0-0 0-0 led to double-edged chances in Bu Xiangzhi -G.Sargissian, Yerevan 2008. b) 6...Bd6 7 c5! (this is the crucial move that tips the game in White's favour) 7...Bxc5 8 dxe5 Ng8 9 Qg4 g6 10 Qg3 just looks good for White. **7 Qxd4 Nc6**



[FEN "r1bqk2r/pppp1ppp/2n2n2/8/2PQP3/2N5/PP3PPP/R1B1KB1R w KQkq - 0 8"]

After luring the queen to the centre it is logical to gain a move by making it retreat. There have been attempts to try something different at this stage, but the centralised queen and a queenside fianchetto give White an instant way to exert pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal. For example, 7...d6 8 Be2 0-0 9 0-0 Re8 10 f3 the e4-pawn is secured and the plan is to carry on developing by making sure any hint of counterplay is cancelled 10...Be6 11 b3 h6 12 Bb2 a6 13 Rad1 Qe7 14 Rfe1 Rad8 15 Nd5 Nxd5? (15...Bxd5 is necessary when 16 cxd5 preserves White's spatial advantage) 16 cxd5 Bc8 17 f4 when the grandmaster playing black realised he was about to lose a piece, because if the knight moves then Qxg7 is checkmate, D.Reinderman-B.Socko, Beijing 2008. **8 Qd2!** A book move that the Englishman would be aware of, but for others it might come as something of a surprise if they were relying on the instinctive reply 8 Qd1. The intention is b2-b3 and Bb2 and with the queen on the second rank the rooks will soon be co-ordinated after castling. This makes it easy for White to play, but Black has problems because there are no obvious targets to

go for in the middlegame. **8...0-0 9 Be2 Ne8** The knight retreats to allow ...f7-f5 in order to try and conjure up some active play. Instead, 9...Re8 and now 10 f3 a safe and steady response cancelling out any threats to the e-pawn while the potential weakness along the g1-a7 diagonal is not a cause for concern when Black has already exchanged the dark-squared bishop. For example, V.Shinkevich-A.Kulikova, Moscow 2009, continued 10...d6 11 0-0 Be6 12 b3 an echo of the main game and a reminder that the white plan is fairly easy to follow, but Black has some problems organising obvious counterplay 12...Qe7 13 Bb2 Ne5 14 Rae1 Rad8 15 f4 Nc6 16 Bd3 Nb4 17 Bb1 Na6 18 Qd4 Nc5 19 f5! Bd7 20 Nd5! (an attacking motif in this variation of the English) 20...Qf8 (yes, 20...Nxd5? does allow 21 Qxg7 checkmate) 21 Nxf6+ 1-0. **10 0-0 d6 11 b3 f5** Black deserves credit for trying to unsettle White, but steady positional play based on the virtues of a queenside fianchetto is an easy way to improve the position. **12 Bb2 Nf6 13 exf5 Bxf5 14 f4** White takes time out to restrict Black from occupying the e5-square with his knight. This theme of cancelling out any hint of active play can be frustrating for Black. **14...Qd7 15 Bf3 Rae8 16 Nd5!**



[FEN "4rrk1/pppq2pp/2np1n2/3N1b2/2P2P2/1P3B2/PB1Q2PP/R4RK1 b - - 0 16"]

Lewis has done all the right things by gradually improving his position and now finds the right moment to unleash his queen's bishop into the action. The big problem for Black is how to cope with the threatening bishop on b2 when White has craftily arranged the exchange of the defending knight on f6. **16...Ne4** Instead, 16...Kh8 17 Nxf6 gxf6 18 Rae1 favours White because of the weakness of the f6-pawn. 17 Qd1 The queen retreats and is already threatening g2-g4 to harass the black bishop. White is certainly on top here. **17...h6 18 g4 Bh7 19 f5 h5?** A mistake in a difficult position, because now Black's position really does fall apart. It is not perfect, but 19...Kh8 keeps the game going as a contest, as 20 Nf4 can be met by 20...Nc5 to help cover the e6-square. **20 Nf4 Bxf5** Williams might have been counting on 20...Nc5, but 21 Bd5+ Kh8 22 g5! is very strong because of the threat of Qxh5. **21 Qd5+ Kh8 22 gxf5** It is time to start counting the pieces. **22...Rxf5 23 Ng6+ Kh7**



[FEN "4r3/pppq2pk/2np2N1/3Q1r1p/2P1n3/1P3B2/PB5P/R4RK1 w - - 0 24"]

24 Nf8+! 1-0

Michael Ridge from the **United Kingdom** e-mailed with a question: "In the O'Kelly Sicilian, after the sequence **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 a6 3 Nc3 b5 4 d4** many sources discuss the distinctively O'Kelly move 4...e6!?, the transposition to a Kan via 4...cxd4 5 Nxd4 e6, and the transposition to a Najdorf via the earlier deviation with 3...d6 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 Nf6. Why, though, is there no

discussion of 3...b5 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 d6!?, perhaps with ...Nf6 to come later, depending on how White plays. Black can with this move order get a Najdorf without allowing the Fischer attack because of the early ...b5, and may be able to avoid Bg5 lines too, it seems. Is there some obvious and crushing down side to this approach? Perhaps some quiet line with Be2 or g3/Bg2 or Be3 in which ...b5 is premature? Or perhaps a quick a2-a4 to undermine the ...b5 move? Or even the immediate 6 Bg5 to make it awkward to complete kingside development? The idea of playing a Najdorf (or, perhaps, a Dragon) while avoiding masses of established theory is somewhat attractive, so I am curious if there is some clear problem with this approach. I have seen some reasonably strong players playing this way as black in my database (over 2400 players, at least), but there is so little written on it that I don't know what the conventional wisdom, if any, there is on this line. Emms doesn't discuss it in his "Dangerous Weapons" piece and it also doesn't seem to be covered in the older Lutes book on the O'Kelly or in Martin's DVD. So any thoughts welcome!"

I have a soft spot for the O'Kelly Variation, because I have taught it to numerous children who wanted a surprise weapon in their repertoire. I suspect the reason why 3 Nc3 is not so closely covered is because the books tend to focus on the main alternatives 3 d4, 3 c4, and even 3 c3. The idea of transposing to the Najdorf is an interesting idea because you do avoid certain lines, but for the others let me first explain why playing 3 d4 is just what O'Kelly players want:

Herve Maechel – Vyacheslav Ikonnikov
Selestat 2007

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 a6 This is widely known as the O'Kelly Variation named in honour of the Belgian player Galway de O'Kelly (1911–80). The opening had been tried before, but when the Belgian played and wrote about the opening in the 1950s the name stuck. **3 d4?! It is harsh to say such an obvious move is dubious, but this is exactly what Black wants White to play in the position because the sly advance of the a-pawn helps to create a positional trick. 3... cxd4 4 Nxd4 e5**



[FEN "rnbqkbnr/1p1p1ppp/p7/4p3/3NP3/8/PPP2PPP/RNBQKB1R w KQkq e6 0 5"]

This is the whole point of playing the O'Kelly Variation because the knight can no longer go to the b5-square where it traditionally heads for the d6-square. Strangely, I have seen quite a few players in weekend tournaments just transpose to their normal lines such as the Najdorf, which misses an opportunity. **5 Nf3** Other moves a) 5 Nf5 d5 6 Ng3 (the offered pawn should be ignored because 6 Qxd5? allows 6...Qxd5 7 exd5 Bxf5 winning comfortably) 6...Nf6 (or 6...Be6 is also possible) 7 exd5 Qxd5 8 Qxd5 Nxd5 9 Bd2 Nc6 when Black can smoothly develop and has no worries, M.Van gen Hassend-B.Fischer, Schoeneck 2009. b) 5 Ne2 Nf6 6 Nbc3 Bc5 (this is a common move in this opening because the threats tend to be ...Ng4 or ...Qb6 to focus on the f2-pawn) 7 Ng3 d6 8 Bc4 Ng4 9 Qf3 (9 0–0 runs into 9...Qh4! when the threat to checkmate on h2 leaves White in a bad situation 10 h3 Nxf2 11 Rxf2 Qxg3 wins) 9...Bxf2+ 10 Ke2 Qc7 gave Black a great position in K.Strand-J.Kvisla, Oslo 2008. d) 5 Nb3 Nf6 and now: d1) 6 Nc3 Bb4 7 Qd3 d5 8 exd5 Nxd5 9 Bd2 (a casual move such as 9 Be2? provokes a crisis upon 9...Nxc3) 9...Nxc3 10 Bxc3 Bxc3+ 11 Qxc3 Nc6 12 Bd3 Qh4 13 Qc5 Be6 14 0–0 Rc8 15 Rfe1 Bxb3 16 axb3 Qe7 17 Qe3 0–0 18 Qh3 g6 19 Ra4 Nb4 20 c3 Nxd3 21 Qxd3 Rfe8 22 Rae4 Rcd8 23 Qc4 Rd2 24 f4 b5 25 Qc6

Qa7+ 26 R1e3 Re6 27 Qc8+ Kg7 28 fxe5 Re2 0–1 D.Kracik-V.Vojtek, Tatranske Zruby 2008. d2) 6 Bg5 Be7 7 Nc3 0–0 8 Bxf6 (or 8 Bd3 Nc6 9 0–0 d6 with a level position) 8...Bxf6 9 Bc4 b5 10 Bd5 Nc6 11 0–0 Rb8 12 a3 Qb6 led to equal opportunities in B.Milic-M.Taimanov, Kiev 1959. **5...Nf6 6 Bg5** Also possible is 6 Nc3 to simply defend the e4-pawn: a) 6...Bb4 7 Qd3 d5 8 exd5? e4! 9 Qe3 0–0 10 Nd2 Ng4 11 Qd4 (if 11 Qxe4 then the pin 11...Re8 is a killer) 11...Nc6! 12 Qc4 Nge5 (if Black wants to be super accurate then 12...Re8! is the star move in view of 13 dxc6 e3 leading to a crushing attack) 13 Qxe4 Re8 14 Be2 Bxc3 (Black should have gone for 14...Nf3+! when 15 Qxf3 Nd4 16 Qd3 Bxc3 17 bxc3 Nxe2 is very good) 15 bxc3 Bg4 16 Kf1 f5 17 Qe3 Ng6 and White can think about giving up, A. Carvalho-S. Rocha, Lisbon 1998. b) 6...Nc6 7 Bg5 Bb4 the queen's knight is pinned and Black has some idea of ...Nxe4 if he can get rid of the pin on g5 8 Qd3 d6 9 Be2 h6 10 Bxf6 Qxf6 11 0–0 Bxc3 now that White has castled Black exchanges the queen's knight before it can occupy the d5-square 12 bxc3 White surprisingly volunteers to double his c-pawns, but the thinking is that after c2-c4 it will help control the d5-square. However, it requires precise play from White otherwise in the long-term it will just turn out to be a weakness. (instead 12 Qxc3 Bg4 13 h3 Bxf3 14 Bxf3 Nd4 15 Bd1 0–0 is also interesting with roughly equal chances) 12...0–0 13 c4 Qe7 14 Rfd1 Rd8 15 c3 Be6 16 Qb1 Qc7 17 Nd2 Na5 18 Qb4 Rac8 19 Rdc1 Rd7 with great play against the weak doubled c-pawns, A. Perez J.Pascual-Vallejo Diaz, Ourense 2008. One of the reasons I have taught this line to improving juniors is that there are plenty of ways to go wrong. There are numerous games that have seen 6 Nxe5



[FEN "rnbqkblr/1p1p1ppp/p4n2/4N3/4P3/8/PPP2PPP/RNBQKB1R b KQkq - 0 6"]

only for Black to reply with the forceful 6...Qa5+ when the check allows the queen to capture the loose knight on the next move. **6...Nc6 7 Nbd2 Bc5** The bishop takes up a familiar role in this variation by pinpointing the f2-pawn and introducing the possibility of ...Qb6. **8 Nc4?** This misses a tactical trick. After 8 Bc4 Black can just castle or play more adventurously with 8...Qb6 when 9 0–0 Qxb2 10 Rb1 Qa3 11 Nh4 gives White the initiative. **8...0–0?** I can only assume the Russian grandmaster was so pleased with his position that he was content to carry on developing to ensure a slight edge. Then again how could he miss the crushing continuation 8...Bxf2+! when 9 Kxf2 Nxe4+ 10 Ke1 Nxe5 looks fantastic for Black in view of 11 Nxe5 Qxe5 12 Nd6+ Ke7! 13 Qd5 (13 Bc4 Nd4 14 Nxf7 Qxe2 15 Rf1 Nxc2+ wins) 13...Qh4+ 14 Ke2 Qg4+ 15 Kf2 Qe6 and Black is winning. **9 Bxf6 Qxf6 10 Qd5** It looks threatening, but is easily rebuffed and the queen just looks misplaced. **10...d6 11 Be2 Be6 12 Qd2 Qg6** The dual threats against the pawns on e4 and g2 plunge White into another crisis. **13 0–0–0 Bxc4 14 Bxc4 Qxe2**



[FEN "r4rk1/1p3ppp/p1np4/2b1p3/2B1P3/8/PPP2PPP/RNBQKB1R b KQkq - 0 13"]

There are some who are wary of opening lines against their king, but White will struggle to organise a swift attack. **15 Ng5** Or 15 Rhg1 Qxf3 16 Qh6 Qf4 + (16...g6? 17 Rxc6+ hxc6 18 Qxc6+ Kh8 19 Qh6+ Kg8 20 Rg1+ Qg2 21 Rxc2 checkmate) 17 Qxf4 exf4 and Black will win. **15...Nd8** 15...h6 also looks good. **16 Nxe7?** It is nice to think that the French amateur is on the verge of a glorious victory against the grandmaster. However, Black is a renowned tournament campaigner and has it all under control. **16...Kxh7 17 Rdg1 Qh3 18 Rxc7+ Kxc7 19 Qg5+ Kh7 0-1**

This is proof that the opening contains some venom so time to move on to the line that interests Mr Ridge:

Maria Carolina Lujan – Bruno Juranic
Rijeka 2008

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 a6 3 Nc3 3 c4 is a fairly common move in international tournaments. There are also many that try 3 c3 here, with the idea that ...a6 in the same c3 Sicilian is a waste of a move. However, how many casual players have the time and energy to play 2 Nf3 intending the Open Sicilian and then can effortlessly play a different line against the Sicilian. The logic is that if they are that good you are probably going to lose most of the time anyway! **3...b5 4 d4** White is happy to enter an Open Sicilian despite the unusual move-order. Instead 4 d3 indicates a preference for a Closed Sicilian type set-up featuring a kingside fianchetto, although personally I like to play my f-pawn forward to f4 before developing the king's knight. The game J. Gallagher-B.Kurajica, Istanbul Olimpiad 2000, went 4...Bb7 5 g3 g6 6 Bg2 Bg7 7 0-0 d6 8 a3 Nd7 9 Be3 e5 10 Nd5 Ne7 11 c4 Nxd5 12 cxd5 0-0 13 b4 Qe7 14 Qb3 Nb6 15 Rac1 Rac8 16 Nd2 Na4 17 Nc4 f5 18 exf5 gxf5 19 bxc5 Nxc5 20 Bxc5 Rxc5 21 Na5 Rxc1 22 Rxc1 Bc8 23 Qb4 Qf6 24 Nc6 f4 25 gxf4?! (25 Rc2 is considered the solid alternative) 25...Bh6! (a clever move to bring the bishop into the action and likely to have been missed by White) 26 d4 Bxf4 27 dxe5 Qh4 (27...Bxh2+! 28 Kxh2 Qh6+ wins) 28 Kf1? (28 e6! is the last chance hoping to weather the storm) 28...Bh3 29 Rc3 Bxg2+ 30 Kxg2 Qxh2+ 31 Kf1 Be3 0-1. **4...cxd4 5 Nxd4 d6**



[FEN "rnbqkbnr/4pppp/p2p4/1p6/3NP3/2N5/PPP2PPP/R1BQKB1R w KQkq - 0 6"]

This is the move that Mr. Ridge is interested in as a way of transposing to the Najdorf, without having to fear lines such as the Fischer Variation with an early Bc4. I have to say not many people have risked following the idea, probably because Black is somewhat behind in development. One also has to contend with lines associated with 3 c3 and 3 c4, so one has to question whether it is worth it. On the other hand, if you reckon there is a chance that your opponent will play 3 d4 against the O'Kelly, then give it a go. 5...Bb7 is often played at this point to help justify the advance of the b-pawn. After 6 Bd3, play might proceed a) 6...Nc6 7 Nxc6 dxc6 8 a4 e6 (perhaps 8...e5 should also be considered) 9 0-0 Nf6 10 Qe2 Nd7 11 Be3 b4 12 Nb1 Ne5 13 Nd2 a5 14 Rad1 Bd6 15 f4 Nxd3 16 cxd3 0-0 17 Nc4 Bc7 18 Bc5 Re8 19 Qh5 g6 20 Qh6 f5 21 Qh3 Qd7 22 e5 Ba6 23 Be3 (23 Qe3 Rad8 24 Nd6 looks promising for White because Black's position is rather cramped) 23...Red8 24 Nd6 Rdb8 ½-½, E.Tomilova-Z.Stanojoski, Paracin 2010. b) 6...b4 7 Na4 e5 Black is hoping to prove that the knight on a4 is out of the game long enough to force the other white knight to take cover from attacks 8 Nf5 g6 9 Ne3 Nf6 10 f3 Be7 11 0-0 0-0 12 a3 Nc6 13 axb4 Nxb4 14 Be2 a5 15 c3 Na6 16 Nc4

d5 17 exd5 Nxd5 18 Nxe5 Qc7 19 Ng4 h5 20 Nf2 (after 20 Nh6+ Kh7 21 Kh1 f5! and the marooned knight on h6 is in trouble thanks to the simple idea of ...f5-f4 to cut off the support of the dark-squared bishop on c1) 20...Rad8 21 Qb3 Bd6 22 h3 Nc5 23 Qc2 Ne6 24 Bh6 Nd4 25 Qd2 Nb3 soon led to victory in V.Liberzon-M.Taimanov, Tbilisi 1966. **6 Bd3** This is one of the popular replies to 5...Bb7, so White probably thinks it will transpose at some point. Still, it makes sense to facilitate the option of castling kingside. I would be tempted to give 6 a4 a punt in view of 6...b4 7 Nd5, when the obvious 7...a5 (7...Bb7 is a somewhat improved response for the obvious reason that 8 Nxb4 Bxe4 restores material parity) 8 Bb5+! Bd7 9 Bg5 with tremendous play because of the lead in development. **6...e6 7 0-0 Nf6 8 Re1** The Argentina ladies international is playing sensible chess and just improving her pieces. Other moves are a) 8 Kh1 Bb7 9 Qe2 Be7 10 f4 b4 11 Na4 0-0 12 c3 Qa5 13 Bc2 Nc6 14 Be3 Nxd4 (maybe 14...d5 with the idea of meeting 15 e5 with 15...Ne4 with roughly equal chances) 15 Bxd4 Qb5 16 c4 Qc6 17 Nb6 Rad8 18 Rae1 led to a level position in L.Perpinya Rofes-S.Fedorchuk, Tarragona 2006, although Black eventually won. b) 8 a3 Be7 9 Kh1 (I quite like 9 Qf3 with the intention of Qg3 or h3 to kickstart an attack.) 9...Bb7 10 f4 Nbd7 11 Qe2 Qc7 12 Bd2 h5 13 Rae1 h4 14 Nf3 ½-½, M.Perunovic-S.Maze, Warsaw 2005. **8...Be7 9 a4 b4 10 Na2 e5 11 Nf5** This seems to release the tension, so maybe 11 Nf3 when 11...Nc6 12 c3 slightly favours White. **11...Bxf5 12 exf5 Nc6 13 c3 bxc3 14 Nxc3 d5** This is the difference compared to other lines, because once the knight is taken on f5, Black can make some progress by forming a decent pawn centre. **15 Bg5 0-0 16 Bc2** White is hoping to chip away at the central pawns, but it can be risky business to encourage a passed pawn to make progress towards the eighth rank. **16...d4 17 Bxf6 Bxf6 18 Ne4 Nb4 19 Ra3 Qb6** I prefer 19...Rc8 when 20 Bb1 a5 safeguards the influential knight on b4 and there is still some work to do if White is hoping to initiate a kingside attack. **20 Rb3 a5 21 Qh5 Qc6?!** The queen is trying to do too much work, when 21...Rfd8 seems so sensible to distract White from her attacking ambitions by being ready to push the d-pawn. **22 Rh3 h6 23 Bb3 d3?**



[FEN "r4rk1/5pp1/2q2b1p/p3pP1Q/Pn2N3/1B1p3R/1P3PPP/4R1K1 w -- 0 24"]

24 Qg6! A clever move making the most of the pin on the a2-g8 diagonal. Now the threat of Rxh6 is hard to deal with adequately. **24...d2** Or **24...Kh8** 25 Rxh6+ gxh6 26 Qxh6+ Kg8 27 Nxf6+ wins. **25 Rf1 d1Q 26 Rxd1 Rfd8?** At least 26...Rad8 has the merit of giving White the job of converting her advantage, but now there is a combination available to force checkmate. **27 Qxf7+ Kh8 28 Rxh6+! gxh6 29 Nxf6 Rxd1+ 30 Bxd1 Qxf6 31 Qxf6+ 1-0**

If anyone has had success with the O'Kelly Variation, then send in the game.

Finally, **Kristen Clark** from **Australia** posed the question [last month](#) about the Scandinavian, and asked "Given my very aggressive outlook as black, is there any other non-traditional opening I might look at to shock White?" Thankfully, reader **Benoist Busson** from **France** has come to his aid with some cheeky openings:

"From slightly unsound to approved: **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d5!?** the Elephant gambit, much better than the Latvian one, which is under a huge black cloud. FM Corbin from Barbados, FM Jonathan Rogers from England, are (were?) good advertisers of this sort of things. **1 e4 Nc6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 e5!?** **4 dxe5 d4 5 Nd5 Ne7!?** instead of 5...f5. **1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6** with Portuguese and

Icelandic ideas. Can help to find some fun in playing black side, sometimes!!
1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nc6!? strange, but not very tactical. Rather strategic, don't you think so? **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nd4!?** (Bird) or **3... f5!?** (Schieleemann) or even **3...Bb4!?** (Alapin, a quite funny variation indeed: what on earth is this bishop doing here?) And I have many more ideas, even rubbish ones!!"

Well, [who dares wins](#).

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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