

Jerzy Konikowski  
Uwe Bekemann

# **Openings**

# **Open Games**

**read – understand – play**



Joachim Beyer Verlag





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**Joachim Beyer Verlag**

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!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
±	White stands better
⊖	Black stands better
±	White stands slightly better
⊖	Black stands slightly better
=	equal
∞	unclear; with chances for both sides
≈	with compensation for the material deficit
Δ	with the idea or intention
□	better is
x	takes
+	check
#	mate

# Preface

Nowadays a whole public library could easily be filled with opening literature. But how does this help a player, who – for whatever reason – cannot afford to buy and/or work through dozens of titles? By offering him this book, which is the first of a small series, we want to cover his basic need for opening information.

Our focus is primarily on players of the following categories:

1. Beginners, who already have a good command of the rules and know the basics of a proper game, and who now need the basic equipment for an orientation in the world of chess openings.
2. Players, who already have some experience, but see a deficit especially in the area of openings, and who want to overcome that deficit quickly and without exaggerated effort.
3. Hobby players, who want to make themselves familiar with certain openings to a degree that enables them to play interesting and entertaining games.

This book is dedicated to the so-called ‘Open Games’ which arise after the initial moves 1.e4 e5. For example such renowned and important openings as the ‘Ruy Lopez’, the ‘Four Knights Game’ or the ‘King’s Gambit’, to name only a few. Each of the 19 chapters covers a specific opening and provides the reader with sufficient information according to the concept described above.

We attach great importance to the presentation of ideas and plans that are inherent in an opening. Therefore, we occasionally even explain the reason for certain seemingly self evident moves, if we think it necessary. Not only shall the reader be enabled to *play* the right move, but also to understand exactly *why* this is the right move. Only then will he be able to play his openings with sense and understanding, instead of just reproducing the lines learned by heart without understanding them. And only then can he keep the guidelines in mind, even if the game leaves the usual way.

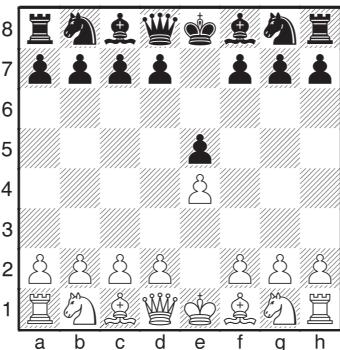
We have done our best to avoid repetition. For example, if we have already explained the meaning of a move in one line, we will not repeat the explanation if the move appears in a similar position. It is therefore advisable to work through the chapters from the beginning and to proceed chronologically in chapters with more than one line.

And finally, one more word about how we have chosen the material. We have basically recorded everything that is considered playable. Within the different lines, we have always looked for promising possibilities to leave the well-trodden

paths. Thereby we want to enable the readers to pose problems to their opponents in practice by surprising them with something they are (hopefully) unfamiliar with. Because well-prepared surprises increase the chances of success and increase the fun!

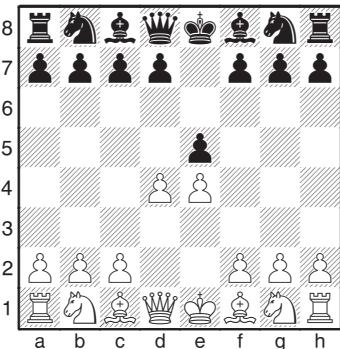
**We hope you enjoy our book and have fun and success in your games! If we can help you a little to achieve your goals, our work has been worthwhile.**

The initial moves **1.e4 e5** lead to the so-called 'Open Games' which are the subject of our book. They are presented in the following order.



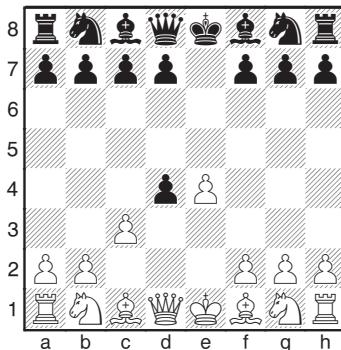
### Chapter 1: The Center Game

**1.e4 e5 2.d4**



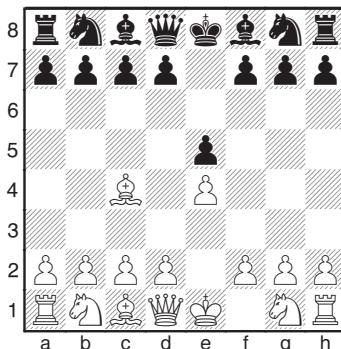
### Chapter 2: The Danish Gambit

**1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3**



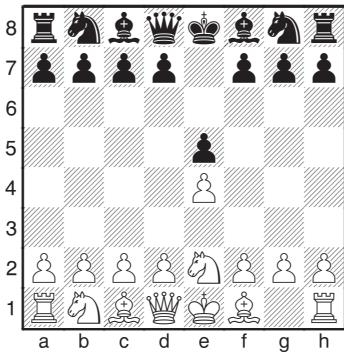
### Chapter 3: The Bishop's Opening

**1.e4 e5 2.♗c4**



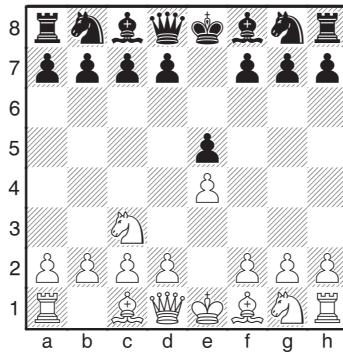
**Chapter 4:**  
**Alapin's Opening**

1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}e2$



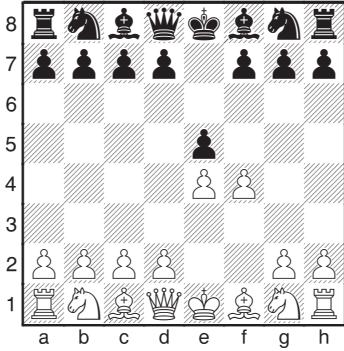
**Chapter 6:**  
**The Vienna Game**

1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}c3$



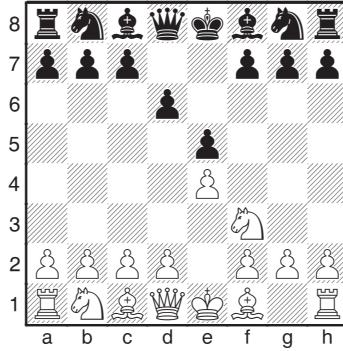
**Chapter 5:**  
**The King's Gambit**

1.e4 e5 2.f4

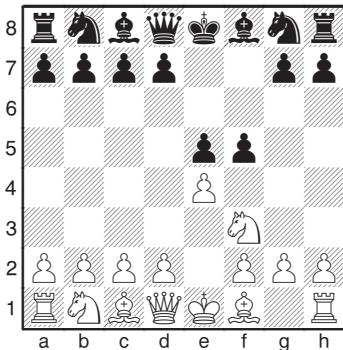


**Chapter 7:**  
**The Philidor Defense**

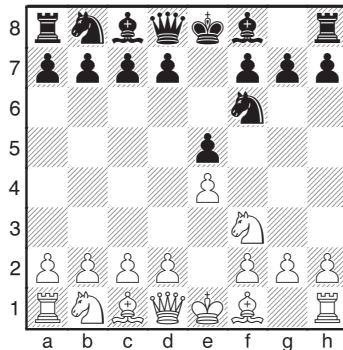
1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d6



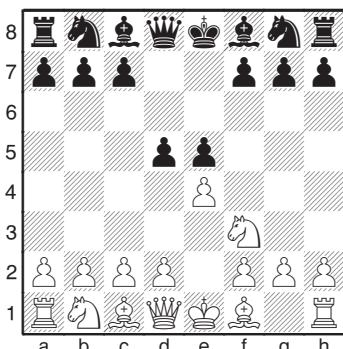
**Chapter 8:**  
**The Latvian Gambit**  
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 f5**



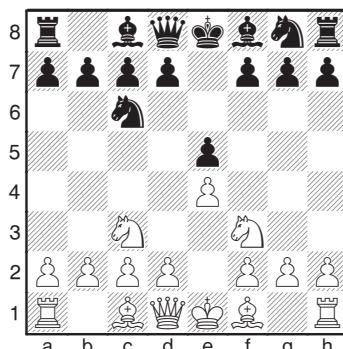
**Chapter 10:**  
**The Petrov Defense**  
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6**



**Chapter 9:**  
**The Queen's Pawn Counter-Gambit**  
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d5**

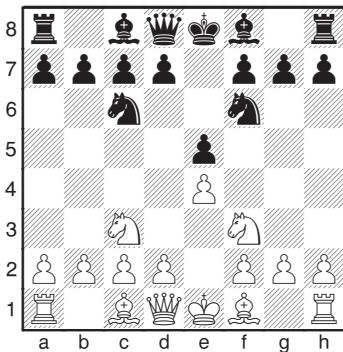


**Chapter 11:**  
**The Three Knights Game**  
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3**

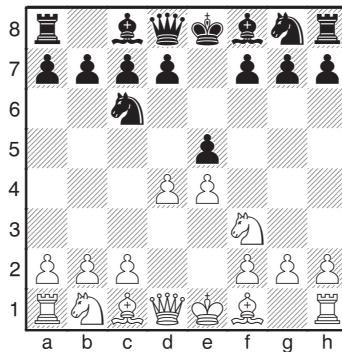


**Chapter 12:****The Four Knights Game**

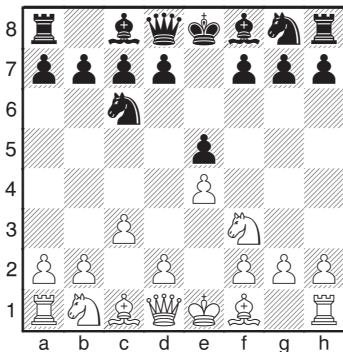
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6**

**Chapter 14:****The Scotch Game**

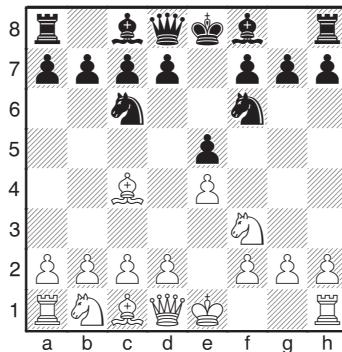
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4**

**Chapter 13:****The Ponziani Opening**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.c3**

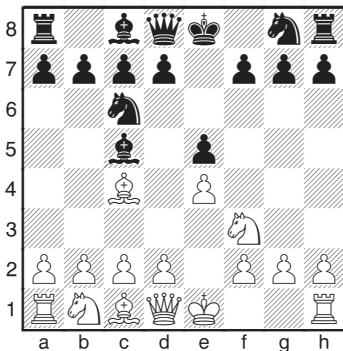
**Chapter 15:****The Two Knights Defense**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6**

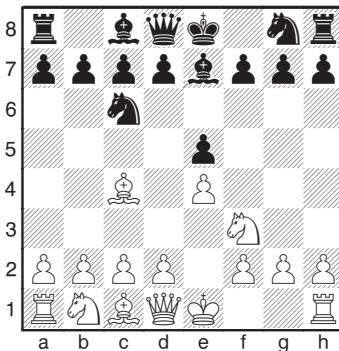


**Chapter 16:****The Italian Game**

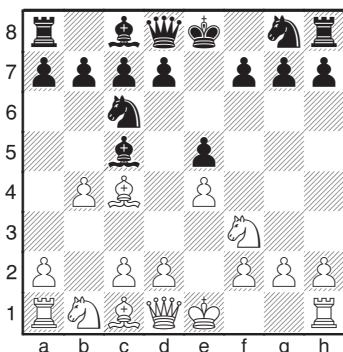
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5**

**Chapter 18:****The Hungarian Defense**

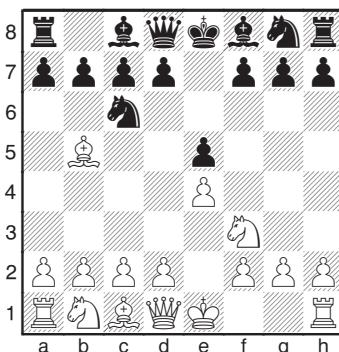
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗e7**

**Chapter 17:****The Evans Gambit**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4**

**Chapter 19:****The Ruy Lopez**

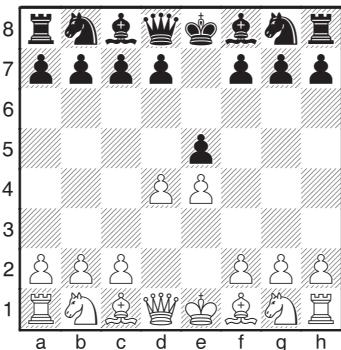
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5**



# Chapter 1

## The Center Game

1.e4 e5 2.d4



White energetically attacks the opposing pawn on e5 and threatens to take it. This is how the Center Game arises. The immediate push of the d-pawn accelerates the events in the central area. If things develop normally, the pawn will be taken, and the white queen takes back. Since it is then exposed early on, Black can play  $\mathbb{Q}b8-c6$  to gain a tempo by attacking it.

However, White has the following simple plan in mind: If Black attacks the queen with  $\mathbb{Q}b8-c6$ , it retreats to e3. The dark squared bishop goes to d2, and after the following 0–0–0 White is ready to take action against the opposing position. Choosing the Center Game, White actually violates the following basic chess rule: Don't develop the queen before the light pieces have been brought into play. However, modern opening theory deals with these problems flexibly, excluding

dogmatic considerations as those behind the aforementioned 'basic chess rule'. As a matter of fact, there are some openings and certain systems in which the queen is quickly activated to launch an attack.

Before we continue, let's clarify the meaning of the term 'gambit'. A gambit is an opening line in which one side sacrifices a pawn (or even two – or even a whole piece) to gain a positional advantage. We will introduce some gambits later on.

**2...exd4**

Taking the pawn is a principled reaction. Some players prefer 2... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ , whereafter things can develop in a different way. For example, 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  would lead to the 'Scotch Game' which we will look at in **Chapter 14**. White can also choose two other interesting continuations.

**A) 3.dxe5  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  4.f4  $\mathbb{Q}g6$**

Up to this point, Black cannot deviate well from the text moves.

**5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$**

Black wants to develop quickly and disturb his opponent's efforts.

**6. $\mathbb{Q}c4$**

The bishop attacks the weak spot in the opposing camp: the pawn on f7. Black must now be very cautious.

(However, White can also play 6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  first, which can lead to the same positions by transposition of moves: e.g. 6...d6 7. $\mathbb{Q}c4$  followed by  $\mathbb{W}d1-e2$ ,  $\mathbb{Q}c1-d2$  and 0–0–0.)

6...c6 7.♘c3 ♖e7

Both sides continue their efforts to bring their forces into play and to seize as much influence as possible.

8. ♖e2 d6 9.f5

(The position after 9.♗d2 b5 10.♗d3 ♘f6 11.0–0–0 0–0 is rather sharp. A position is characterized as ‘sharp’ if a single move can already lead to serious changes, and if both sides can steer the game in a different direction by means of quick actions. However, at the same time both sides have to make sure not to lose their influence. And they have to be very careful to keep the opponent from seizing the initiative. In the given position a sharp play can be expected with White becoming active on the right side by means of h2–h3 and g2–g4 – and his opponent on the other by means of a7–a5–a4, b5–b4 etc.)

9...♘e5 10.♗xe5 dxе5 11.♗e3

Now White will soon play 0–0–0 and obtain good prospects. Black has yet to set his plan, and he can aim for either the short or the long castle.

**B)** The second good continuation starts with 3.d5. The white pawn jostles the opposing knight and forces it to leave its place. Therefore, Black loses some time and cannot continue the important development of his forces. At the same time, the white d-pawn invades Black’s camp, disturbs the opponent and wins some space for the pieces.

3...♘ce7 4.♗e3

A good development move.

4...♘f6

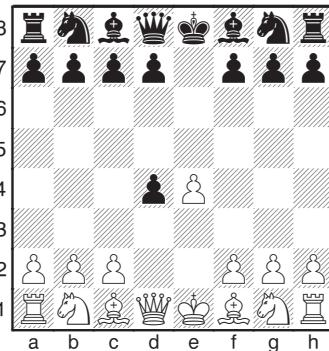
By attacking the white e-pawn, Black forces his opponent to make a protective move.

5.f3

The following moves show an example of how both sides can bring their forces into play.

5...♘g6 6.♗d2 h6 7.♗e2 ♗e7 8.♗bc3 d6 9.0–0–0 a6 10.h4 c5 11.g4

It’s easy to see that White has a strong initiative on the king side. The term ‘initiative’ signifies the ability to influence and shape the events. In the final position, however, Black can obtain counter play on the other side with 11...b5. The play is complicated and sharp.

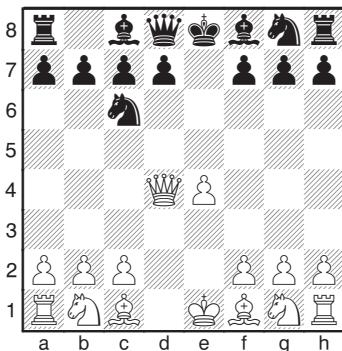


3.♕xd4

Taking with the queen consolidates the central position. A very sharp continuation is the material sacrifice 3.c3! – the so-called ‘Danish Gambit’. We will have a closer look at it in **Chapter 2**.

3...♘c6

A logical answer. Black brings his queen knight into play and threatens the white queen, which must therefore give up its dominating central place.



#### 4. $\mathbb{W}e3$

This is the best reaction and a part of White's plan that we have already announced further above. After the alternative 4.  $\mathbb{W}a4$ , Black has greater chances to equalize than after our recommendation. The following exemplary line illustrates how to do so.

4...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.  $\mathbb{B}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  6.  $\mathbb{B}c3$  0-0 7.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d6  
8.0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Black can be satisfied with his position.

#### 4. $\mathbb{Q}f6$

A good choice! It's important to speed up the development of the pieces. 4...  $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  5.  $\mathbb{B}c3$  transposes to the main line and is thus also playable.

#### 5. $\mathbb{B}c3$

White also strives for rapid development, focusing on the queen side, though. The tempting move 5.e5 is not recommended because of 5...  $\mathbb{Q}g4$

6.  $\mathbb{W}e4$  d5! with very good play for Black.

#### 5... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

This is the most logical continuation. Black pins the opponent's knight and intends to castle right away. Then the rook on f8 moves to e8 and puts pressure on the pawn on e4.

After the alternative 5...  $\mathbb{Q}e7$ , the reply 6.  $\mathbb{B}d2$  would be little ambitious because Black could counterattack in the center by means of 6...d5!=. Therefore, White should develop the other bishop and play 6.  $\mathbb{B}c4$ .

#### 6. $\mathbb{B}d2$

The bishop unpins the knight and could take back on c3 in case of  $\mathbb{Q}b4xc3$ . In addition, White sticks to his plan by preparing the long castle.

#### 6...0-0

The king's safety is a very important asset in a game of chess. Black takes the correct decision if he first castles before taking any other actions. He now plans the typical central push d7–d5!.

#### 7.0-0-0

White has completed the development of his queenside and secured his king. Now he can try to attack the opponent's king with moves like  $\mathbb{Q}f1-c4$  and  $\mathbb{W}e3-g3$ .