

opening repertoire

# the Queen's Gambit

## Damian Lemos

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# About the Author

**Damian Lemos** is a grandmaster from Argentina. He is a former Pan-American junior champion and was only 15 years old when he qualified for the international master title. He went on to become a grandmaster at 18. An active tournament player, he also trains students at [ichess.net](http://ichess.net).

# Contents

About the Author	3
Preface	6
1 The Queen's Gambit Declined	7
2 The Tarrasch Defence	63
3 The Slav Defence	88
4 The Queen's Gambit Accepted	134
5 The Chigorin Defence	190
6 The Albin Countergambit	207
7 Other Defences	226
Index of Variations	243
Index of Complete Games	251

# Preface

Creating a repertoire for the white pieces is no easy task. Nowadays the large amount of theory out there makes it even harder. After finishing my first work, *Opening Repertoire: The Fianchetto System*, John Emms at Everyman Chess suggested the Queen's Gambit as a subject for another book. I decided to take on the challenge and the result is in your hands now.

Why the Queen's Gambit? It is definitely the most aggressive approach for White after 1 d4 d5 and 2 c4 is also the best move if we want to fight for an advantage. My goal was to create a repertoire that allows us to reach the middlegame with a solid foundation while not depending too much on 'exact theory'. Instead, the focus is on strategic plans and positional understanding.

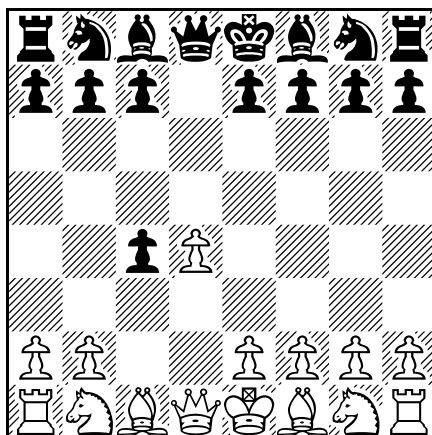
Throughout this project good use was made of *Mega Database 2018* (ChessBase), *Stockfish 10* and the ChessBase Online Database. I must also acknowledge and thank John Emms and Byron Jacobs for giving me the chance to write my first two books, as well as my family and all my chess friends for their endless support.

Damian Lemos,  
Santa Cruz de la Palma,  
July 2019

# Chapter Four

## The Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

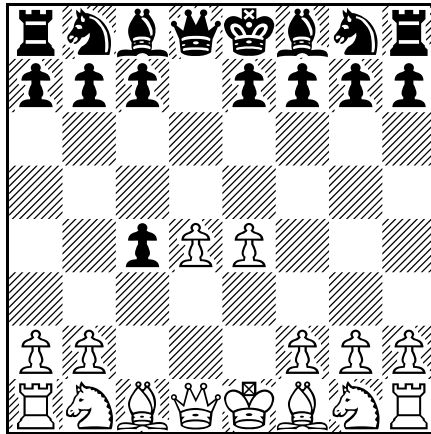


Against the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) we are going to take an aggressive approach with 3 e4!. Personally, I think 3 e4 is more challenging than the main line 3  $\text{Nf3}$  followed by e3 and  $\text{Qxc4}$ , when Black usually plays a quick ...c5 and ...cxd4, giving White an isolated queen's pawn. By contrast, after 3 e4 we have already built up a pawn centre and we usually emerge with more space, especially in the case of 3... $\text{Nc6}$  and 3... $\text{Nf6}$  4 e5.

Our centre and extra space is also of paramount importance in the following endgame: 3...c5 4  $\text{Nf3}$  cxd4 5  $\text{Qxd4!?$ , as covered in Game 35, while our development advantage is quickly felt after 3...e5 4  $\text{Nf3}$  exd4 5  $\text{Qxc4}$ , which we'll explore in some detail towards the end of this chapter.

Game 33  
**R.Ponomarev-I.Sokolov**  
 Zafra 2007

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4



I think this is the most aggressive approach against the QGA. As we will see in this chapter, it is often employed by strong grandmasters.

**3...b5!?**

The text move is unsurprisingly risky for Black, since he does not develop and White can open the queenside by simple means.

**4 a4 c6 5 axb5**

White can also consider 5 b3, although Black then frees his position with 5...e5 6 axb5 ♖b4+!? 7 ♙d2 ♚xd4 8 ♙xb4 ♚xa1 9 ♙xc4 ♚d4, reaching a murky position.

**5...cxb5 6 ♘c3!**

White has to aim for rapid development. It is not necessary to focus on regaining the pawn immediately. Besides, after 6 b3 e5 Black manages to trade pieces off, with good chances to equalize.

**6...♙d7**

The ultra-aggressive 6..a6 is the main line and the subject of our next game, Wagner-Smeets. The text is probably the only other playable move, since 6...b4 just loses a pawn after 7 ♚a4+ ♙d7 8 ♚xb4 when c4 is falling next, while 6...♚b6?! cannot be recommended either, since Black has violated too many opening rules and after 7 b3 White has a clear advantage.

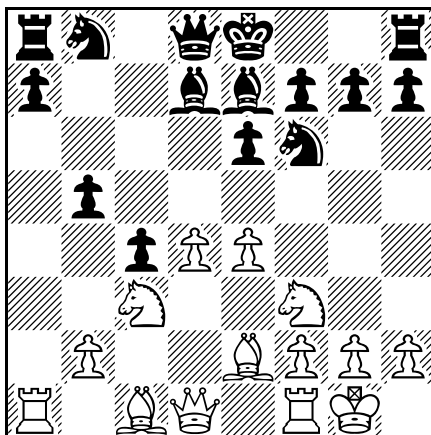
**7 ♘f3 e6 8 ♙e2**

8 ♘e5 is also very promising. After 8...♘f6 9 ♙e2 ♘c6 10 0-0 b4 (or 10...♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘g8 12 ♙e3 and all Black's pieces are still on the back rank) 11 ♘xd7 ♚xd7 12 ♘b5 (12

## Opening Repertoire: The Queen's Gambit

e5!?) 12...♖xe4 13 ♗xc4 ♘d6 (otherwise White advances with d4-d5, while 13...♗f6 runs into 14 ♗f4!) 14 ♗xd6+ ♗xd6 15 d5 White opens up the position as his bishop-pair becomes powerful.

**8...♗f6 9 0-0 ♗e7**



Black has to castle as soon as possible, otherwise his king is going to be trapped in the centre.

9...b4 can be met in two promising ways:

a) 10 ♖a4 ♗xe4 11 ♗xc4 ♘d6 (or 11...♗d6 12 d5 0-0 13 ♖e2 ♗f6 14 dxe6 ♗xe6 15 ♗xe6 fxe6 16 ♖xe6+ ♗h8 17 ♗e3 when White has a clear advantage) 12 ♗d3 followed by ♗c5 with a great initiative for White.

b) 10 e5 ♗d5 (after 10...bxc3 11 exf6 cxb2 12 ♗xb2 gxf6 13 d5 White's advantage is clear) 11 ♗e4 with strong play for White.

### **10 d5 exd5**

After 10...b4 White has the zwischenzug 11 d6. Then after 11...♗f8 (or 11...bxc3 12 dxe7 ♖xe7 13 bxc3 ♗xe4 14 ♖d4 and ♗a3 is coming next) 12 e5! bxc3 13 exf6 ♗c6 14 bxc3 ♖xf6 15 ♖a4 ♗e5 16 ♗a3! White's development causes Black serious headaches.

### **11 exd5**

Unfortunately for White the natural 11 e5 is not effective after 11...♗e4. White only obtains a tiny plus after 12 ♖xd5 (or 12 ♗xd5 ♗c6 13 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 14 ♗d4) 12...♗xc3 13 bxc3 ♗c6.

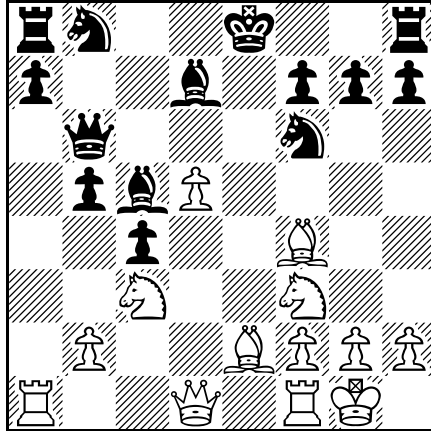
### **11...♖b6**

Others:

a) If 11...♗c5 12 ♗g5 0-0 13 ♗e4 ♖e7 14 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 16 ♖d2 and White can consider playing the manoeuvre ♖a3-g3 at some point.

b) 11...♗d6 looks like a better try, but after 12 ♗g5 h6 13 ♗h4 0-0 14 ♗e4 White will weaken Black's kingside.

### **12 ♗f4 ♗c5**



Black is about to castle and it appears that his position is safe. However...

**13 ♖xc4!**

...is an imaginative try which sets Black great defensive problems. White develops a strong attack and traps Black's king in the centre. Another approach is 13 b3 b4 14 ♘a4 ♙xa4 15 bxa4 when 15...c3 is met by 16 ♙b5+.

**13...bxc4**

After 13...0-0 14 ♙d3 White's passed pawn on d5 allied to the fact that Black cannot develop his queenside gives the first player a clear advantage.

**14 ♜e2+ ♝f8 15 ♞e5 ♙f5**

This is a mistake (15...h6 is better), but it is not easy to deal with White's attack over the board.

**16 ♞a4 ♜b5 17 ♞xc5**

Even after trading queens White maintains the initiative, as shown by 17 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 18 ♞xc4 ♙d3 19 ♞fc1.

**17...♜xc5 18 ♞xc4 ♜d4**

Not 18...♜xd5? 19 ♞fd1 ♜e6 20 ♞d8+ ♞e8 21 ♙d6+ and mate is coming soon.

**19 ♙e5**

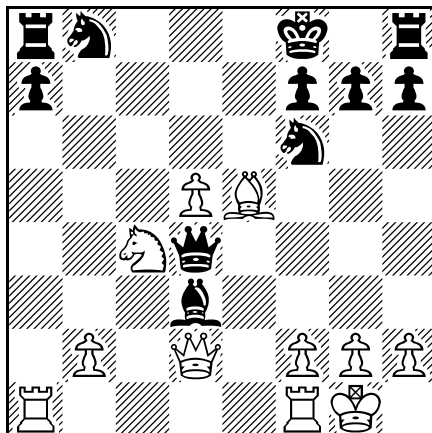
Even stronger is 19 ♙d6+ ♝g8 20 ♞fd1 ♜e4 21 ♜xe4 ♞xe4 22 ♞b6 when White has a clear advantage.

**19...♙d3**

Or if 19...♜d3 20 ♙d6+ ♝g8 21 ♜xd3 ♙xd3 22 ♞b6 ♙xf1 23 ♝xf1.

**20 ♜d2**





**20...♖xd5**

If 20...♖xc4 then 21 ♖fc1 ♖g4 22 h3! ♗d7 23 ♖xd3, and if 23...♘xd5 24 ♗d6+! winning.

**21 ♗fd1?**

White spoils his fine effort with a blunder. 21 ♗xf6! was winning, as shown by 21...gxf6 (21...♗xc4 22 ♖b4+ ♖g8 23 ♗fd1 is crushing) 22 ♘e3 ♖e4 23 ♗fd1 ♗b5 24 ♖d6+ ♖e7 25 ♖d8+ ♖xd8 26 ♗xd8+ ♖g7 27 ♘f5+ ♖g6 28 ♗xh8 ♖xf5 29 ♗d1.

**21...♖xc4**

Not 21...♗xc4? 22 ♖b4+.

**22 ♗ac1 ♖a6?**

It is never easy to find the best defence when you are facing a relentless attack. Black could have exploited White's lapse on move 21 with 22...♖e6! 23 ♗xf6 (or 23 ♖b4+ ♖g8 24 ♖b7 h5 25 ♗xf6 ♗e4 and Black wins) 23...♘c6 and Black survives with an extra piece.

**23 ♗xf6**

23 ♗d6+!? ♖xd6 24 ♗c8+ ♖e7 25 ♗xh8 looks better for White.

**23...♘d7**

Side-stepping 23...gxf6 24 ♖h6+ ♖e7 25 ♖e3+ ♖e6 26 ♖xd3 with a raging attack.

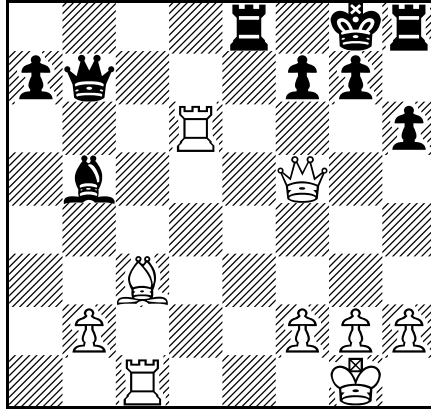
**24 ♗c3 ♗b5 25 ♖g5 ♘f6**

Black cannot play 25...f6 in view of 26 ♖d5 followed by ♗b4+.

**26 ♖c5+ ♖g8 27 ♗xf6 h6 28 ♗c3**

Now material is equal, but the game will be decided by White's superior development and activity.

**28...♗e8 29 ♗d6 ♖b7 30 ♖f5**



White plans ♖g4.

**30...♖e7?**

This makes things easier for White. 30...a6 31 ♖g4 ♜h7 offered better resistance.

**31 ♖xb5! 1-0**

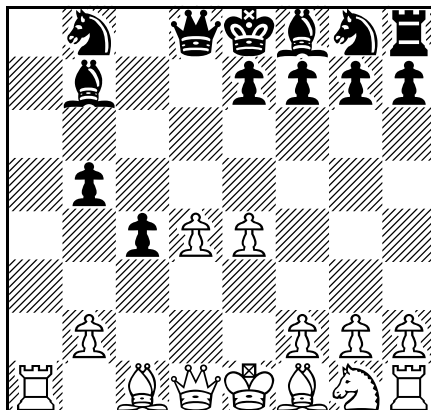
Black's rook is hanging.

*Game 34*  
**D.Wagner-J.Smeets**  
German League 2018

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 b5 4 a4 c6 5 axb5 cxb5 6 ♘c3 a6**

A critical and fairly topical choice.

**7 ♘xb5 axb5 8 ♜xa8 ♙b7 9 ♜a1**



9 ♖a2 is another key move to consider. I prefer the text because it keeps things simple for White.

### 9...e6!

Development is much more relevant than material.

After 9...♗e4 10 b3 (10 ♖f3 followed by ♗e2 looks extremely safe for White) 10...♗c6 11 f3 White's position is clearly better according to the engines, although accuracy is required. After all, having the king in the centre is always a risky enterprise: 11...e5 12 fxe4 (12 bxc4! is the right way to go for White, but I suggest playing out all the possibilities with the help of an engine in order to fully understand these sharp lines) 12...♞h4+ (Black misses a great opportunity to mix things up with 12...♗b4+ 13 ♗d2 c3 14 ♗xb5 cxd2+ 15 ♖e2 ♞b6, with an unclear position) 13 g3 ♞xe4+ 14 ♖f2 ♗xd4 15 ♗g2 ♞f5+ 16 ♖f3 ♗c5 17 b4 (Black's attack is over and so is the game) 17...♗f6 18 bxc5 ♗e4+ 19 ♖g1 0-0 20 ♗e3 ♗c3 21 ♗xd4 exd4 22 ♞d2 dxe3 23 ♞xe3 h5 24 h3 1-0, R.Leitao-E.Matsuura, Tres Barras 2015.

### 10 ♗e2

As pointed out before, development is much more important than material. As such, 10 f3 is very risky because Black has lots of possibilities involving moves like ...f5, ...♗c6 and ...♗b4+, and even 10...f5 11 exf5 ♗c6!? seems extremely difficult for White to face in practice.

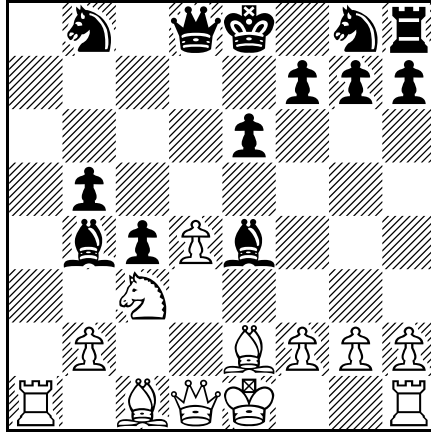
### 10...♗xe4

Now after 10...♗f6 11 f3 Black no longer has the possibility of playing ...f5.

### 11 ♗c3 ♗b4

With 11...♗c6 12 ♗e2! b4 13 ♗b1 ♗xg2 14 ♖g1 ♗d5 15 ♗d2 I don't mind losing pawns so long as White maintains the initiative. The following game is a model example of that strategy: 15...c3 16 bxc3 bxc3 17 ♗b1 (White obtains a winning advantage after 17 ♗b5+! ♗c6 18 ♗xc6+ ♗xc6 19 ♗e4 ♗ge7 20 ♖a6 with ♗c5 and ♞a4 to follow) 17...♗b4 18 ♞a4+ ♗c6 19 ♗b5 ♞d6 20 ♞a8+ ♖e7 21 ♗g5+ ♗f6 22 ♞xh8 ♗a2 23 ♞xg7 c2+ 24 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 25 ♗xd2 ♗xd4 26 ♞g3 ♞c5 27 ♗d3 ♗b3 28 ♖c1 ♗xc1 29 ♗xc1 ♞c3+ 30 ♖e2 ♗d5 31 ♞h4+ f6 32 ♖g7+ ♖d6 33 ♞a4 ♞e5+ 34 ♖f1 1-0, M.Rodshtein-K.Alekseenko, Russian Team Championship 2017.

### 12 ♗e2!



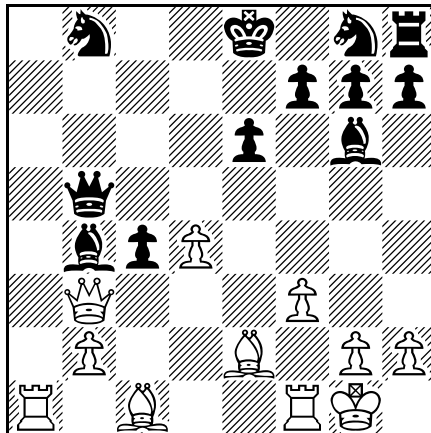
Several games have been lost by White defending his pawns and not developing his minor pieces here.

**12...♖d5**

Alternatively, 12...♗xg2 13 ♖g1 ♗e4 14 ♗d2 with a clear edge for White (after 14 ♖xg7 ♗g6 White's rook is trapped, but even in this variation White has much the better chances following 15 d5 ♕f8 16 ♖xg6 hxg6 17 dxe6).

**13 f3 ♗g6 14 0-0 ♖b7 15 ♗e4**

Very logical from a human point of view. However White had an amazing option available in 15 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 16 ♖b3!!.

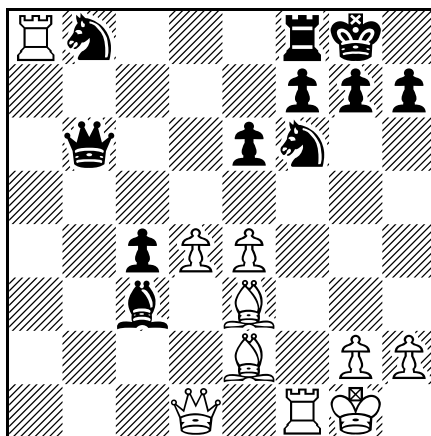


White is going to play ♗xc4, ♖a4 and ♗d2. He is doing extremely well, as shown by the lines 16...♗e7 17 ♗xc4 ♖b6 18 ♗d2 ♖xd4+ 19 ♗e3 ♖e5 20 ♖xb4 ♖xe3+ 21 ♕h1 ♗bc6 22 ♖a8+, 16...cxb3 17 ♗xb5+ ♕e7 18 ♖a7+ ♕f6 19 ♗f4 and 16...♖b6 17 ♗xc4 ♗e7 18 ♗d2 ♗bc6 19 ♖a8+.

15...♖b6

After 15...♗f6!? White is probably still better, although the position is far from clear.

16 b3 ♕xe4 17 fxe4 ♙c3 18 ♖a8 ♘f6 19 ♙e3 0-0 20 bxc4 bxc4



21 ♖b1

21 ♖a4 would have been even faster, but White got there in the end.

21...♙b2 22 ♗h1 ♖b7 23 ♖a2 c3 24 ♙d3 e5 25 dxe5 ♗fd7 26 e6 fxe6 27 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 28 ♖a7 ♖c6 29 ♖f1 ♗bd7 30 ♙b5 ♖d6 31 ♙xd7 ♗xd7 32 ♖a8+ ♗f8 33 e5 ♖e7 34 ♖a7 ♖e8 35 ♙d4 h6 36 h3 ♗g6 37 ♖f3 ♗h7 38 ♖f6 ♖g8 39 h4 ♙c1 40 ♙xc3 ♙e3 41 ♖d7 ♗f4 42 ♙a5 ♙c1 43 ♖e7 ♗g6 44 ♖c5 ♖a8 45 ♖c2+ ♗h5 46 ♖d1+ ♗xh4 47 ♖xg7 1-0

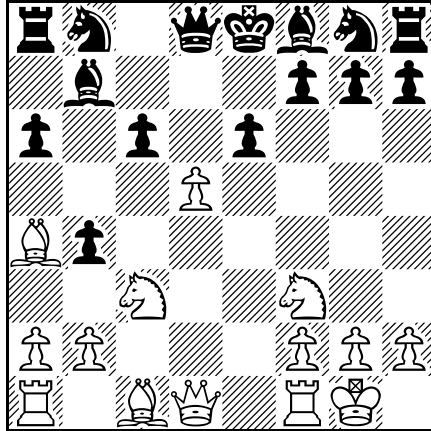
Game 35  
**Y.Vovk-N.Nikcevic**  
 Cappelle-la-Grande 2013

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 a6

This is a fairly solid try for Black, who hopes to hit back against White's centre just as he does in the 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♙xc4 a6 variation.

4 ♙xc4 c5

Playing a quick ...b5 is premature, as the following spectacular variations demonstrate: 4...b5 5 ♙b3 ♙b7 6 ♗f3 e6 (6...♙xe4 7 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 8 ♗g5+ leaves Black's position full of weaknesses) 7 0-0! (when you have a huge advantage in development, material is not that relevant) 7...♙xe4 8 ♗c3 (speeding up White's development and now d4-d5 is imminent) 8...♙b7 9 d5 b4 (after 9...exd5 10 ♗xd5 White already has a winning advantage) 10 ♙a4+ c6.



Here White can crash through with 11  $\text{Nxe5!}$   $\text{Qc7}$  12  $\text{Nxf7}$   $\text{Qxf7}$  (or 12...  $\text{Qxf7}$  13  $\text{dxe6}$   $\text{Qf5}$  14  $\text{Nd5}$  when White has a clear advantage) 13  $\text{dxe6+}$   $\text{Qe7}$  14  $\text{Qh5}$   $\text{g6}$  15  $\text{Qg5+}$   $\text{Qe8}$  16  $\text{Nd5}$  giving him a decisive attack.

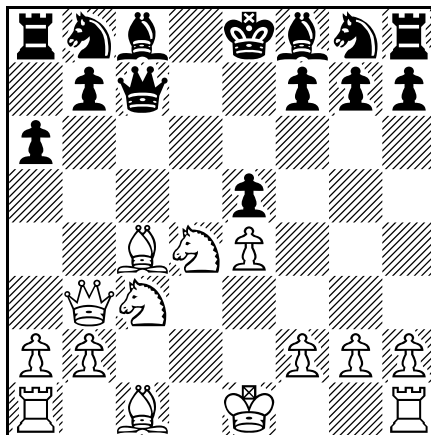
**5  $\text{Nf3}$   $\text{cxd4}$  6  $\text{Nxd4}$**

An ambitious move from White, but trading queens should also offer a small advantage. We will look at such an approach in our next game.

**6...e6?!**

As pointed out by Grandmaster Sumets, this natural move (blocking the diagonal of the c4-bishop) is dubious.

Black should play 6...e5 7  $\text{Qb3}$  (White doesn't get much after 7  $\text{Qa4+}$   $\text{Qd7}$ ) 7...  $\text{Qc7}$  8  $\text{Nc3!}$  (as usual, development is what really matters; Black gets a good position after both 8  $\text{Nf3}$   $\text{b5}$  or 8  $\text{Ne2}$   $\text{Nc6}$ ). Let us take a look at Black's possibilities here:



a) After 8...b5 the long variation 9  $\text{Ndxb5}$   $\text{axb5}$  10  $\text{Nxb5}$   $\text{Qb7}$  11  $\text{Qd5}$   $\text{Nc6}$  12  $\text{Qc4}$   $\text{Ra6}$

## Opening Repertoire: The Queen's Gambit

13 0-0 ♖f6 14 ♙e3 ♗xd5 15 exd5 ♖b4 16 a3 ♗xd5 17 ♚xd5 ♚xd5 18 ♗c7+ ♘d8 19 ♗xd5 is good for White.

b) 8...♗f6 is the most solid try for Black, but after 9 ♖f3 ♙d6 10 ♙g5! (there is no rush to castle) 10...b5 (Black cannot connect his knights by means of 10...♗bd7 because f7 is hanging) 11 ♙d5 ♗xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♚b7 13 ♚d3 I prefer White's chances.

### 7 0-0 ♚c7

Black has to control the e5-square. If 7...♗f6 then 8 e5 ♗d5 (or 8...♗fd7 9 ♙f4 when White has much more space, as well as a good plan with the ♗c3-e4-d6 manoeuvre) 9 ♚g4 with a clear advantage for White.

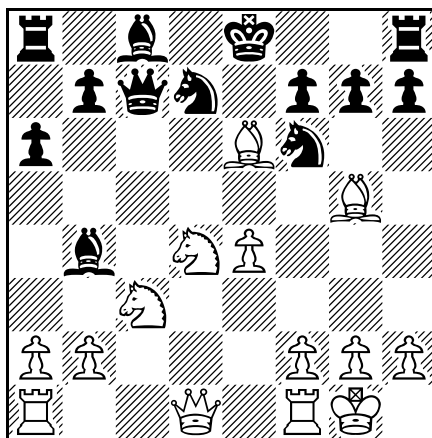
### 8 ♙b3 ♗f6 9 ♗c3 ♙b4

Black cannot afford to be playing this when he is so far behind in development. 9...♙e7 is better, although after 10 ♙e3 0-0 11 ♚c1 the positional pressure continues.

### 10 ♙g5 ♗bd7

10...♙xc3 11 ♙xf6 ♙xd4 (or 11...gxf6 12 ♚c1) 12 ♙xd4 gives White the bishop-pair and Black a vulnerable kingside.

### 11 ♙xe6!



White acts quickly before Black can complete development.

### 11...fxe6

11...♙xc3 12 ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 13 ♙xf6 does not help Black.

### 12 ♙xf6?

White errs. He can obtain a winning position by means of 12 ♗xe6 ♚b6 13 ♗xg7+ (13 ♗d5 ♗xd5 14 exd5 is also very good) 13...♙f7 14 ♗f5 when the position resembles a Sicilian Defence gone horribly wrong for Black.

### 12...♗c5?

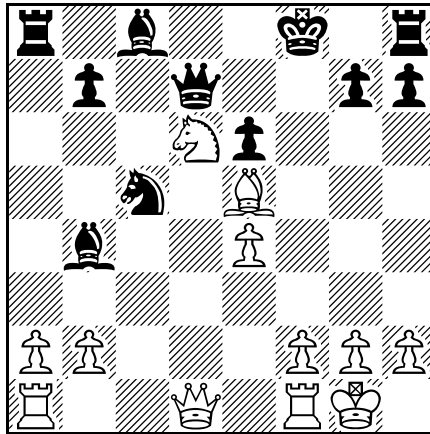
Black had to play the cold-blooded 12...gxf6! 13 ♚h5+ ♘e7 14 ♚h6 (if 14 ♗xe6? ♘xe6 15 ♗d5 ♚e5 when Black survives and keeps the extra material, while both 14 ♗f5+ ♘d8 and 14 ♚g4 ♗e5 15 ♚g7+ ♗f7 lead nowhere for White) 14...♙f7 15 ♚h5+ ♘e7 and there is

nothing better than repeating moves with 16 ♖h6 (not 16 ♖ad1 ♙xc3 17 bxc3 ♘c5 18 ♖h6 ♙f7 19 ♖h5+ ♙f8 when Black has a clear advantage) 16...♙f7 17 ♖h5+, etc.

**13 ♘db5!?**

13 ♘c2 is good enough to keep the advantage for White after 13...♙xc3 14 ♙xc3 ♘xe4 15 ♙b4.

**13...axb5 14 ♘xb5 ♖d7 15 ♘d6+ ♙f8 16 ♙e5**



White's forces create a pleasing effect. There is not much Black can do to get his pieces out.

**16...♘a4?**

The last try was 16...♘a6 17 ♖f3+ ♙g8 18 ♖fd1 ♖e7 19 ♖ac1 ♙xd6 20 ♙xd6 ♖f7 21 ♖b3 and Black is fighting on.

**17 ♖c1 ♙xd6 18 ♙xd6+ ♙g8 19 ♖c7 ♖b5 20 ♙e5! 1-0**

Black has no defence against both ♖xg7+ and ♖d8+.

Game 36

F.Berkes-M.Perez Candelario

Spanish Team Championship 2014

**1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 c5 3 c4 dxc4 4 e4 cxd4 5 ♖xd4**