

**The Modernized
Ruy Lopez**

Volume 2

**A Complete
Repertoire for
White**

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Volume 2

A Complete Repertoire for White

Dariusz Świercz

Thinkers Publishing 2021





I dedicate this book to

*my lovely wife Keyla, with whom I share my life and who loves
me and supports me every day,*

*my parents, Mamúś Ela and Tati Jurek, without whom I would
have never achieved anything,*

*my sister Ola, BIL Wit, Otylia and Marek, who root for me in
every game I play,*

my R.I.P grandma Irena, who always believed in me,

my R.I.P grandpa Rysiek, who taught me the game of chess.

I wanted to say thank you and I love you!

Key to Symbols

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
N	novelty
⊙	lead in development
⊕	zugzwang
=	equality
∞	unclear position
∞̄	with compensation for the sacrificed material
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has a serious advantage
∓	Black has a serious advantage
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
→	with an attack
↑	with initiative
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea of
⊃	better is
≤	worse is
+	check
#	mate

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Foreword

While writing the forward to the first volume of this series in August of 2021 I noticed some interesting ideas in the book and was hoping to try them out against strong players. I did not have to wait long. The prestigious Champions Chess Tour kicked off with the Skilling Open in November. While preparing for the last day of competition I noticed that one of my opponents, Spanish GM David Anton, regularly employed the open variation of the Ruy Lopez as Black. I then reviewed an idea in the last chapter of the first volume and decided to give it a try in our battle. I blitzed out the first 23 moves and was pleasantly surprised to see 23...h5 appear on the board. The move is very natural, yet a huge mistake from Black that was already refuted in an earlier classical game and restated by Dariusz Swiercz. The fact that I read this book while GM Anton was not aware of it gave me a clear advantage. As a result, I won that game very quickly having to think independently for only 5 more moves before my opponent resigned.

The continuation described in my own game is not Dariusz's greatest discovery, yet it was enough to bring me an important tournament point and prove the comprehensiveness of his work. I am delighted to see that Dariusz has carried forward a consistent approach to the Ruy Lopez in the book you now hold. He has conducted a great amount of research to include the latest games and theoretical trends, so you are well prepared in all scenarios.

Overall, I believe that anyone interested in playing the Ruy Lopez with either color should study this book. Dariusz has constructed a complete modern repertoire for White in the Ruy Lopez. For those of you who only play a variation for Black you would do well to review your opponent's options from one of the leading experts in this opening. I am sure chess players of all strengths will benefit immensely from Dariusz's books the same way I did.

GM Liem Quang Le
World Blitz Champion 2013
Saint Louis, January 2021

Introduction

Dear Reader,

I would like to thank you for purchasing this book, I really appreciate it. It also means that you found an interest in my work of trying to crack the Ruy Lopez.

As I said in the introduction to the first volume, I had no idea what I was signing up for when deciding to write a book on Ruy Lopez. This opening has such a rich history and good reputation that proving advantages in many lines is nearly impossible. Writing the first volume on this opening was a Herculean effort and I thought “it cannot be more difficult”. After all, I was covering such solid variations as the Berlin and the Open Spanish. Well, I got surprised again! I am not exaggerating when I say that writing the second volume was at least as hard as writing the first one.

This second volume on the Ruy Lopez consists of two parts. In the first part I focus on modern systems with ...♘c5, attempting to dissect both the Archangelsk and Moller Variations. These two variations have quite a rich history but in 2020 there have been several developments. If I had to name one person that contributed the most to the developments in those lines it is, without a doubt, Fabiano Caruana. His encounters in the Candidates Tournament in Ekaterinburg, then his theoretical discussion in those lines with Leinier Dominguez, revised my opinion on many of those lines and led to interesting discoveries that I analyze in this book.

In the subsequent part I discuss the Closed Ruy Lopez. It is easily one of the most popular openings throughout the history of chess with many games occurring as early as the 1800s. I suggest going for 9.h3 which usually leads to a positional battle. I present new trends and find new paths and ideas in such evergreen variations as the Zaitsev, Breyer, Chigorin and others. Additionally, I attempt to crack the Marshall Attack by suggesting the Anti-Marshall lines with 8.a4. I must admit that I thought that it would be a pretty easy task to analyze those openings having some prior analysis and experience with both colors. However, time after time I was encountering new challenges and new ideas from both sides that I had to resolve. My conclusions, based on careful analysis with the most powerful engines currently available is presented in this book.

This book completes my series on the Ruy Lopez.

I would like to take a moment and recall what I said in the introduction to the first volume. When both sides play very good and sound chess, it is normal that games end in a draw. It is especially true for such sound openings as Ruy Lopez. I do not attempt to dismiss one line or another because somewhere with best play Black can make a draw by force on move number 30, playing sometimes ridiculous moves that are only found during the analytical work. Over the board the reality is way different – practical aspect plays an important role in chess. Some positions are easier to play, some harder. Similarly to what I did in the first volume, I try to offer the most playable positions. I do not mind if the positions are equal, provided it is easier to play with White or the chance of an error by Black is quite large. Sometimes I go into forced variations (e.g. in Moller Defense or Archangelsk Defense), sometimes into more positional battles (like in the Zaitsev) but I truly believe that the positions I aim to reach have potential and are tricky for Black. With proper knowledge I think White can put pressure on Black in the Ruy Lopez.

I hope that you will find my approach to tackling the Ruy Lopez interesting. I am aware that there is only so much I can analyze and someone may say that I did not analyze some positions deeply enough but that is the nature of chess – possibilities are pretty much unlimited and there will always be theoretical debate!

Finally, I wish you, dear Reader, good luck and I hope you can successfully use the ideas that I present in this book in your games.

Thank you,
Dariusz Swiercz



Part I

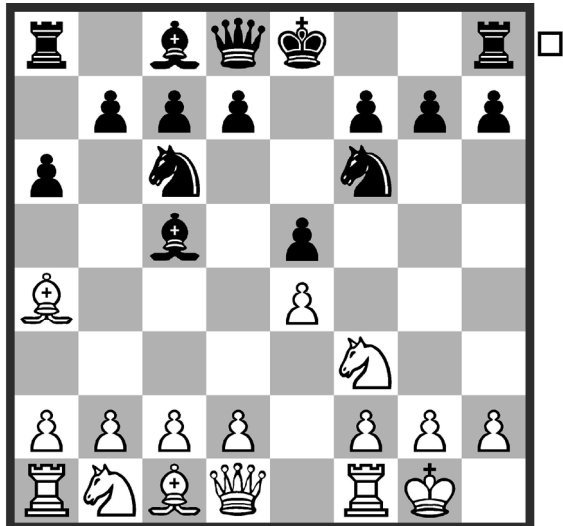
Systems with ...  c5





Moller Defense

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6
3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6
5.0-0 ♙c5



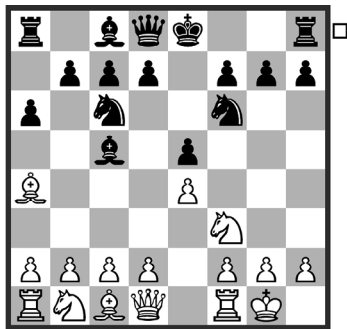
Chapter Guide

Chapter 1 – Moller Defense

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙c5 6.c3 b5 7.♙c2 b5 8.a4	
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a) Introduction

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♖b5 a6 4. ♗a4
♘f6 5. 0-0 ♗c5



Position after: 5... ♗c5

The Moller Defense is some sort of hybrid of the Classical Defense (or even Deferred Classical Defense) which I discuss in Volume 1. It became a popular choice lately due to Fabiano Caruana's games.

The Moller Defense offers some flexible move order and White cannot easily achieve his perfect setup with c3-d4 as Black can immediately go for counterplay in the center. The positions here are often very complicated, but according to my analysis, I think White can put lots of pressure on Black, even though with perfect play Black can possibly equalize.

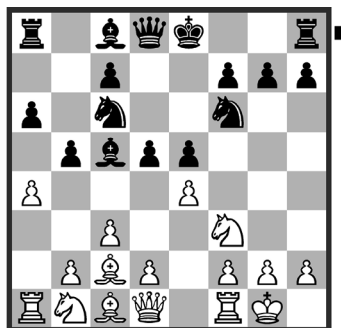
6. c3 b5

This is an interesting approach that recently has gained a lot of popularity.

Usually, if Black wants to play ... ♗c5, it happens after 5...b5 6. ♗b3 ♗c5. Here, however, the move order was reversed, which gives White an additional option of 7. ♗c2, which I suggest as it leads to a very combative fight. Let us see what can happen here!

6... 0-0 is a viable alternative. There have been some developments in this line lately, one of the reasons being numerous games of Magnus Carlsen.

7. ♗c2 d5 8. a4!?



Position after: 8. a4!?

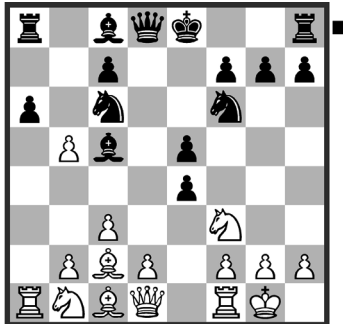
I think that this is the most critical approach to this line. It definitely is very testing, but it also involves some risk that White is willing to take. A small word of caution though - these lines require memorization and willingness to go for crazy positions. However, objectively speaking, they offer good chances to win the game, unlike other lines that lead to less complicated posi-

tions. Therefore, I decided to choose this line and analyze it thoroughly so that you can extract the maximum value. Black has several possibilities.

8... dxe4

This is mostly played here. There are alternatives following alternatives: 8... ♖b8 and 8... b4 but they are considered to be inferior relative to the mainstream 8... dxe4.

9. axb5



Position after: 9. axb5

9... ♗g4

This move did not have a good reputation until recently. White has scored well here. In 2020 Fabiano Caruana played an amazing new idea in his game against Leinier Dominguez which leads to absolutely crazy positions.

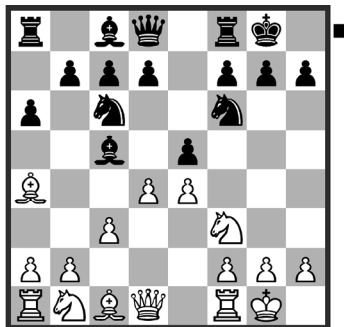
A) 9... exf3 This line has generally been considered as the main option for Black. Here White has some chances, but practice shows that Black has decent defensive resources. Yet White achieves a nearly risk-free position where he can exert pressure on Black for many moves.

B) 9... O-O This move has not been played yet but it definitely deserves attention as well.

Let us begin the analysis!

b) 6...0-0 alternative

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♚b5 a6 4. ♚a4
 ♘f6 5. 0-0 ♚c5 6. c3 0-0 7. d4



Position after: 7. d4

In this position Black has essentially three logical continuations, but only two of them are decent.

7... ♚a7

This is the most popular lately. Thanks to having played ...a6 Black has the a7-square available for the bishop.

Alternatives are following:

A) 7... ♚b6 This is a relatively rare move, but it has been recently played by Fabiano Caruana. He had to have a reason to go for it, so we should not dismiss that.

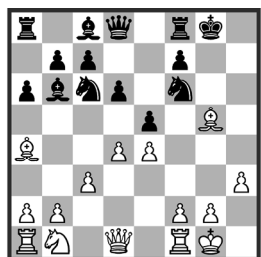
A1) 8. ♚g5 This happened in Nepomniachtchi – Caruana (2020). Even though it looks somewhat scary

for Black I do not think it is particularly dangerous. 8... h6 9. ♚h4 d6



Position after: 9... d6

10. h3 stopping ...♚g4 in any case, and provoking Black's next move. [10. ♚c1!? could be considered too, temporarily stopping ...g5. However, I am not sure whether it is so great. 10... ♚e7 11. ♚e1 ♚d7 looks pretty solid for Black.] 10... g5! 11. ♘xg5 hxg5 12. ♚xg5



Position after: 12. ♚xg5

Here Caruana had to play 12... ♚g7!∞ and White would have to work hard to prove sufficient compensation. The position is extremely unclear. [12... ♚h7? was Caruana's