Simon Williams

Opening Repertoire: The Killer Dutch Rebooted

About the Author

Simon Williams is a Grandmaster, a well-known presenter and a widely-followed streamer, as well as a popular writer whose previous books have received great praise. He is much admired for his dynamic and spontaneous attacking style.

Also by the Author
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Grandmaster Gambits 1 e4 (with Richard Palliser)
How to Win at Chess Quickly
The Black Lion
The Iron English (with Richard Palliser)
The Killer Dutch
The London Jobava System
The New Sicilian Dragon

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Introduction

The Classical Dutch has been my go-to opening for some 35 years now. It is the first opening I learnt to counter 1 d4 and still the opening that I play the most regularly now.

With 1...f5, Black is taking the fight right to White. Going for a combination of central and kingside attacking play the Classical Dutch will always lead to some very exciting middlegames where you must embrace the 'do or die' mentality!

The Classical Dutch has brought me several great wins, with victims including Boris Gelfand and Radoslaw Wojtaszek. This book is my latest take on the Classical Dutch and it is my most up-to-date work on the opening. Originally available as a Chessable course, you now have my life's work on the Dutch in written format. In some ways I hope this is the 'bible' of the opening that everyone needs in order to have fun with a super-exciting opening."

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Simon Williams,
Godalming,
September 2022

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Chapter One
Model Games and Key Ideas

The Key Main Line

Let's jump in at the deep end and take a look at arguably the most critical test of our entire repertoire. Throughout this book I've aimed to be as objective as possible, trying to never fail to point out which lines we really need to know, and I just hope you'll also really like Black's dynamic chances throughout the repertoire and especially in this key line!

1 d4 f5
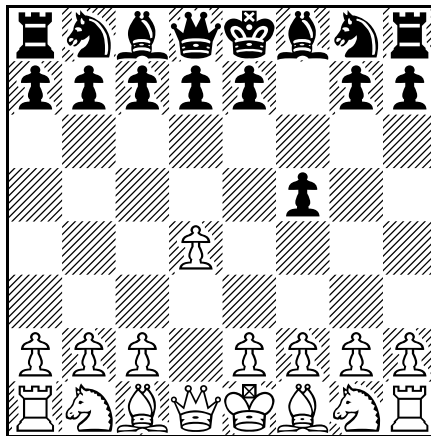
I should mention at this point that I nearly always play 1...e6, but 'true' Dutch players will play 1...f5. There are pros and cons with both move orders. If you play 1...e6 then you must be ready for a French Defence if White plays 1 e4. On the plus side, 1...e6 avoids a number of Dutch sidelines like 2 ♗g5, 2 e4, etc. 1...f5 suits our repertoire better, but here you need to know what to do against some second move ideas from White and we'll cer-

tainly tackle all his many alternatives to the common kingside fianchetto we'll now see.

2 ♘f3

I must admit that 2 ♘c3 used to scare me, but after filming a DVD for GingerGM with GM Roeland Pruijssers I started to like Black's position after the sequence 2...♘f6 3 ♗g5 d5!. Of course, we will also take a look at the London System style approaches with ♗f4. There's also 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 e6 4 ♘h3 (4 ♘f3 would be our main line below), which was a set-up that used to concern me when writing *The Killer Dutch*, but that fear has long passed. 4...♗e7 5 c4 0-0 6 0-0 d6 7 b3 c6! 8 ♗b2 ♕c7! is the correct way to handle White's plan, as seen in Game 15, N.Pert-R.Pert, British Championship, Coventry 2015.

2...e6 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6
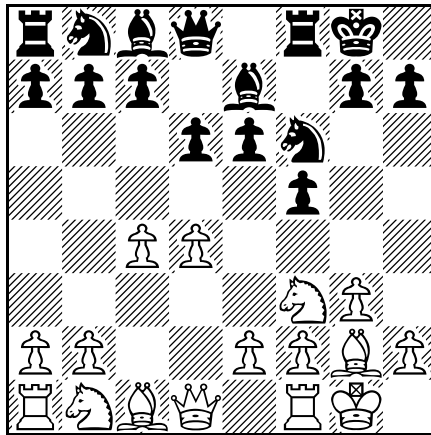
This is likely to be the position that you will reach the most in the Classical Dutch, so it is one you need to know well.

7 ♘c3

The quiet move 7 b3 is one of the trickiest to meet. White wants to control e5 and wait with his knight on b1, as d2 could be a better square for it. After some thought I have concluded that 7...a5! is the best way for Black to proceed.

7 b4!? isn't dissimilar to 7 b3, yet having the pawn on b4 has its downsides. Mainly it is more exposed to attack here, with moves like ...a5 and then after b4-b5 Black can hit back with ...c6.

7...♘e4!

The best move. Instead, 7...♕e8 8 b3 ♘e4 9 ♘xe4! is a problem for Black and in these Classical Dutch lines, exchanging knights with ♘xe4 fxe4 is always the option that White should be aiming to play.

8 ♘xe4!

The only way for White to fight for an advantage.

Instead, 8 ♕c2 ♘xc3 9 ♕xc3 a5 10 b3 ♗f6 11 ♗b2 ♘c6 12 ♕d2 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♕d5+ ♔h8 15 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 reaches a key endgame where Black is fine, as we'll see. Here I've

also looked at 9...♗f6!?. I wanted to give you two choices, which are pretty much equally good. You must decide which you prefer based on your own style. In short, 9...a5 allows an exchange of queens and an ending in the key line, while 9...♗f6 maintains more tension.
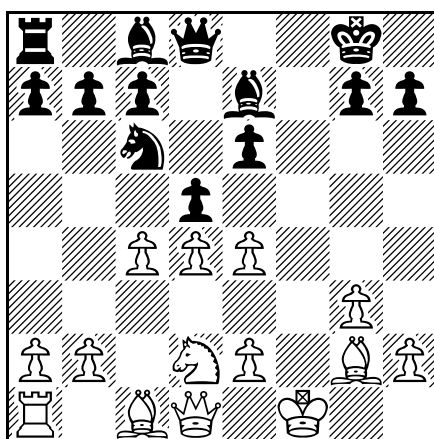
8...fxe4 9 ♘d2

The most aggressive square for White's knight.

There's also 9 ♘e1 when 9...d5 10 f3 ♘c6!? is a relatively new idea that I will be suggesting.

9...d5 10 f3 ♘c6 11 fxe4

11 e3!? is another line which I predict could become quite popular for White in the future. This is certainly a safer option for White.

11...♖xf1+ 12 ♔xf1

This is the current trend at grandmaster level. Recapturing with the king may look odd, but it keeps White's other pieces on good squares.

12 ♘xf1 was the old main line, but after 12...dxc4 13 ♗e3 ♗d7! things look fine for Black from a theoretical standpoint.
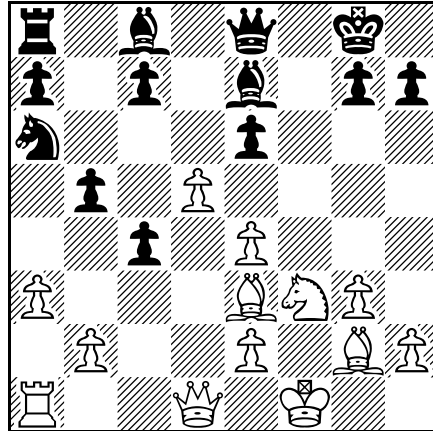
12...dxc4 13 ♘f3!

This was discussed on the ChessPublishing website at length. It is a big test at the moment, but I have found some ways that Black can play without fear.

13...b5 14 ♗e3 ♕e8!?

Instead, 14...a6 is seen in Game 14, Ward-N.Pert, British Championship, Hull 2018.

15 d5 ♘b4 16 a3 ♘a6

Now 17 b4 is one of the computer's top choices, leading to a very complex position. In any case though, Black has an equal and dynamic set-up, and just the kind of fun we want in the Dutch.

In the next game my opponent, rated 2721 at the time and the second of the then world champion, Vishy Anand, succumbed to the power of the Classical Dutch. I hope that after reading this book, you will also be able to create some masterpieces in the Dutch!

Game 1
R.Wojtaszek-S.Williams
French 'Top-12' Team Championship, Mulhouse 2011

1 d4 f5

For training purposes I've changed the early move order, which was 1...e6 2 ♘f3 f5.

**2 ♘f3 e6 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6**

The main line of the Classical Dutch and a position that we will concentrate on as you are very likely to reach it in your own games.

7 ♕c2

Not a great square for the queen unless White can play e2-e4.

7...a5 8 ♘c3 ♘c6

A very nice position for Black since ...e5 is coming. It should be noted that the ...e5 break is the main move for Black to aim for in the Classical Dutch.
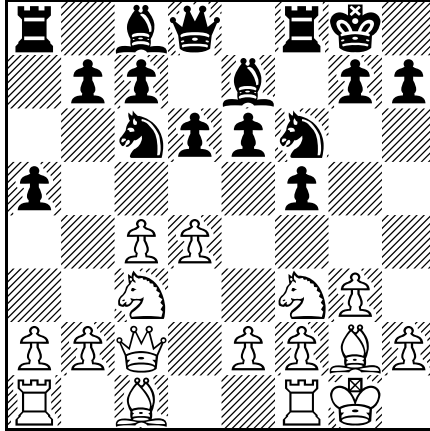
9 b3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♖d1 ♕e8

Another manoeuvre that you should aim to remember. The queen moves over to h5, where it starts an attack against White's kingside.

12 ♘b5

Hitting c7, but who cares about pawns?

12...♕h5!?

Played in the spirit of a drunk 18th century coffee house player! 12...♗d8 is safer, with a perfectly fine position for Black, but safe is boring, right?

13 ♘xc7 f4

Aiming everything at White's king. Whilst White may be able to defend with the utmost accuracy, this kind of attack is certainly not pleasant to face. And who cares about rooks?

14 ♘xa8 ♗c5
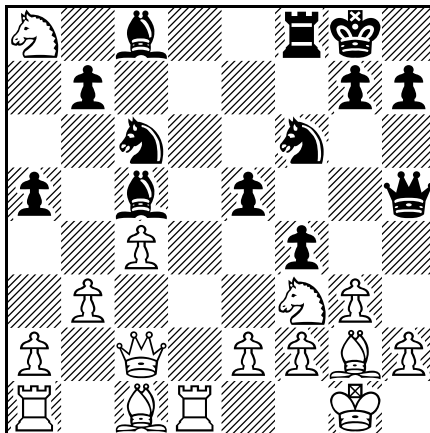
Increasing the pressure against f2.

15 ♖d5?

It is easy to go wrong when faced with such a crazy attack, even for someone as strong as Wojtaszek. After this move even the computer starts to like my position.

Let's take a quick look at what the engines suggest as the best defence for White: 15 gxf4! is *Komodo*'s first choice where it starts to rate the position as being roughly one and a half pawns up for White ('+1.40'), but then it changes its mind to a only pawn ('+1.10'), which is all very confusing. Here 15...♗f5 is the most logical response (if 15...e4 16 ♗e3!, and if 16...♗xe3 17 fxe3 exf3 18 exf3 ♗f5 19 e4, or 15...♘g4 16 e3 exf4 17 ♖d5!), when 16 e4! would be a very hard move for a human to find (but if 16 ♕b2 ♘g4!). Let's just follow the computer's first line of thought: 16...♗xe4 17 ♕e2 ♖xa8 18 ♗b2 ♗f5 19 ♕d2 and things do start to look good for White.

15...♘b4

Now Black is just better.

16 ♖xe5 ♘xc2 17 ♖xh5 ♘xh5 18 ♖b1 fxg3 19 hxg3 ♘xg3 20 ♖b2 ♗f5 0-1
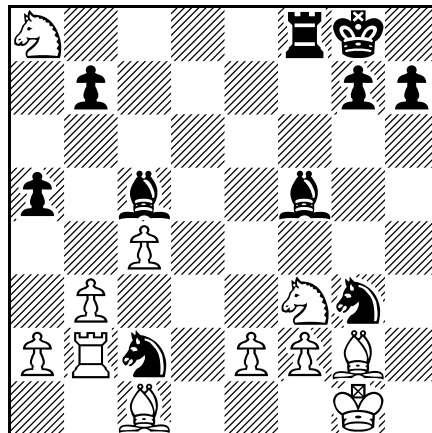
Well I enjoyed that game.

A similar game that I had with the white pieces began 1 f4 d5 2 ♘f3 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♗e2 c5 5 0-0 ♘c6 6 d3 ♘f6 7 a4 0-0 8 ♔h1. The only difference between this Wojtaszek-Williams is that my king is placed on h1. Occasionally, I play 1 f4 as it is not such a bad move. Will you also be tempted by the odd use of 1 f4 come the end of this book? After 8...♕c7 9 ♘c3 a6 10 e4 dxe4 11 dxe4 ♖d8 12 ♕e1 ♘d4 13 ♗c4!? you'll see a certain echo of the game we've just seen.
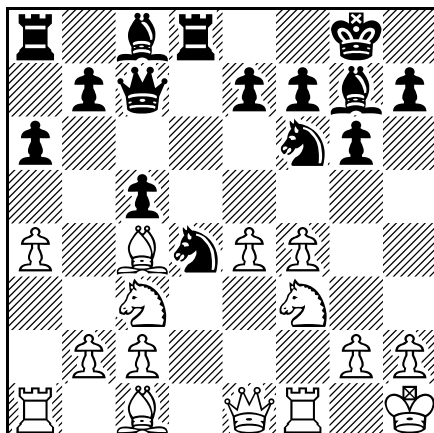
Instead, 13 ♗d1 would have been the sensible move, but I am not always known for being sensible. After 13...♘xc2 14 ♕h4 ♘xa1? (14...♖d4 would have been much stronger) 15 f5 b5!? 16 axb5 axb5 17 ♘xb5 ♕b7 18 ♘g5 e6 19 ♘xh7 I enjoyed a very dangerous attack. Play concluded: 19...♘xh7 20 ♕xd8+ ♘f8 21 ♕h4 f6 22 e5 (Black's position now goes downhill quickly) 22...g5 23 ♕g4 ♕e7 24 ♗xg5 fxg5 25 f6 ♕f7 26 ♗d3 ♗xf6 27 exf6 ♘h7 28 ♘d6 ♕d7 29 f7+ ♔f8 30 ♗xh7 1-0, Williams-Yuan Zhong Zhao, World Under-20 Championship, Yerevan 1999.

In our next game I had the honour of playing against Boris Gelfand. Boris had lost the world championship to Vishy Anand earlier in that year. In that match, Anand was not able to win with Black against Boris, but of course he didn't play the Classical Dutch... In actual fact, the match between these two super stars was very closely fought, going to tie-breaks after a 6-6 draw in the Classical section, with each player winning once with White.

> ## Game 2
> ## **B.Gelfand-S.Williams**
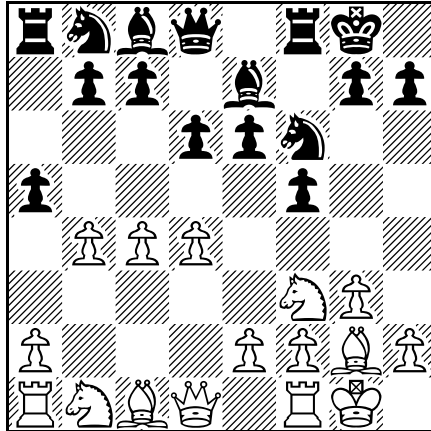> European Club Cup, Eilat 2012

1 d4 f5

Once again, to make things simpler, I've switched the move order, which was actually 1...e6 2 c4 f5.

2 c4 e6 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 0-0 d6 7 b4

Avoiding the main line after 7 ♘c3 ♘e4 8 ♘xe4 fxe4. Maybe my renowned opponent could not find anything worth playing as White in the main line?

7...a5

To create some mischief on the queenside. If Black wants to play in this way then it is worth going ...a5 now, before White has a chance to hold his pawns together with a2-a3.

7...♘e4 is another good option: for example, 8 ♗b2 ♘d7!?. Here 8...a5 is still playable, but it does now allow White the option of 9 a3, and not 9 b5 a4!.

8 b5 ♘e4 9 ♕c2 ♗f6

9...♘d7!? is given as a more flexible option by Moskalenko in his book, *The Diamond Dutch*, and it does look like a decent option: for example, 10 ♘c3 ♘xc3 11 ♕xc3 ♕e8 with ideas of playing ...♗f6 and ...e5.

10 ♗b2 a4 11 ♘fd2 d5
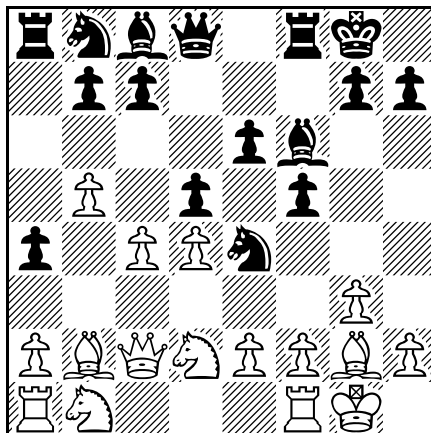
It makes sense to transpose into a Stonewall structure when White has played an early b4.

12 ♘a3

12 ♘xe4 may have been a better option, getting rid of that pesky knight. Then 12...fxe4

13 f3! is a standard follow-up when there is a black pawn on e4.

12...c6 13 ♖ab1 ♗d7 14 ♖fc1?!

It seems strange to move this rook here. A much better idea would have been 14 e3!. White stops Black from ever playing ...f4, thereby keeping some control over the kingside. Even so, Black's position seems fine if he now undertakes some active operations on the queenside: for example: 14...cxb5 (14...♗e8!? is another idea) 15 ♘xb5 ♗xb5 16 cxb5 ♘d7, with a perfectly acceptable position.

14...♗e8 15 ♘f3?

A serious mistake, as now I can attack on the kingside.

15...f4!
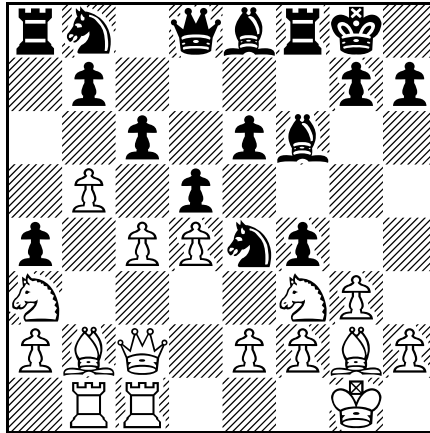
A standard idea in the Dutch. Remember it!

16 ♕d1

Worse would have been 16 gxf4 due to 16...♗g6 17 ♕d1 ♗h4 when all my pieces flood into White's position.
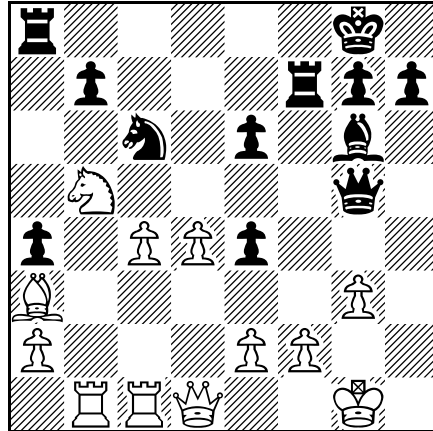
16...fxg3 17 hxg3 ♗g6!

17...♗g5 was also tempting, but White is OK after 18 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 19 ♗xe4 dxe4 20 ♖c3.

18 bxc6 ♘xc6 19 ♘b5 ♗g5 20 ♗a3 ♖f7

Even better might have been 20...♗xc1: for example, 21 ♗xf8 ♗e3! 22 fxe3 ♕xf8 when White has a number of weaknesses on the kingside.

21 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 22 ♗xe4 dxe4

White's kingside now looks so weak and this was better than 22...♗xe4 as that would allow 23 ♘d6.

23 ♕e1?!

I was expecting 23 ♘d6 when the following variation looked very tempting: 23...♖xf2! 24 ♔xf2 ♖f8+ 25 ♔g2 (if 25 ♔e1 e3) 25...e3 26 ♕g1 ♗xb1 (or 26...♖f2+ 27 ♕xf2 exf2 28 ♖xb7 h5 29 ♔xf2 h4) 27 ♖f1 ♗f5 28 ♘xf5 ♖xf5 and Black is a lot better.

23...e3 24 f3 ♗xb1 25 ♖xb1 ♖f6

Going for checkmate. After all, checkmate is the end of the game!

26 ♔g2 ♖h6 27 g4 ♘e7?

Missing a simple tactic. 27...♘xd4! 28 ♘xd4 ♕f4 29 ♕g3 ♕xd4 was correct, and if 30 ♖xb7 e5.

28 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 29 ♕g3 ♖d8 30 ♕e5 ♕h4 31 ♕g3

I have let Gelfand back in the game. Now a draw is not a bad result, but it is not so often that one gets a chance to try and beat such a player as Gelfand.

31...♕e7 32 ♕e5 ♖g6!? 33 c5 ♖g5 34 ♕xe3 h5 35 ♘d6 hxg4 36 f4 ♖h5
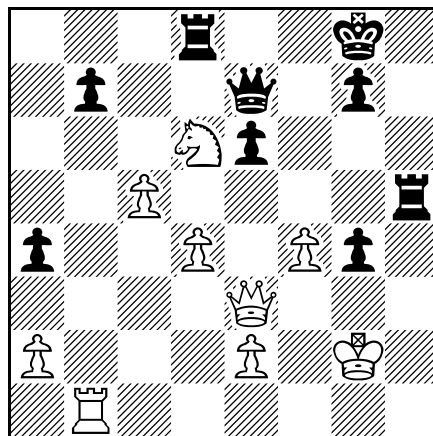
37 ♕g3?

An error. Better would have been 37 ♖xb7 ♕f6!? and who knows what the correct assessment of this position is? Instead, here 37...♕h4 looks like a draw after 38 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 39 ♘f7+ ♔h7 40 ♘g5+ ♖xg5 41 fxg5 ♕h3+ 42 ♔g1, since if Black tries for more with 42...♖f8? he would even lose due to 43 ♕h6+!.

37...♕f6 38 ♕xg4 ♖h6 39 f5

A very tricky position, since, for example, 39 ♔f3 allows my queen to enter the white position after 39...♕xd4.

39...exf5 40 ♘xf5 ♖g6 41 ♘e7+ ♕xe7 42 ♕xg6 ♕xe2+ 43 ♔h3 ♖d5 0-1

Gelfand resigned here, due to something like 44 ♖g1 ♕f3+ 45 ♔h4 ♖xd4+ 46 ♖g4 ♖xg4+ 47 ♕xg4 ♕xg4+ 48 ♔xg4 ♔f7.

Next we'll see a very nice game from Black, even if it was a blitz encounter. Arutyunova demonstrates some key ideas that everyone must be aware of in the Dutch.

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Game 3
I.Gromova-D.Arutyunova
Women's World Blitz Championship, St. Petersburg 2018

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1 d4 f5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 g3 ♗e7 5 ♗g2 0-0 6 0-0 d6 7 ♘c3 ♘e4!

I am still a fan of this move. Black plants the knight on a good central square, freeing up the dark-squared bishop to be able to move to f6. We'll take a deeper look at this line and all the current theory later on in this book.

8 d5?

A big error, giving Black just the kind of position that any Dutch player should be happy with. 8 ♘xe4! fxe4 still looks like the critical test.

8...♘xc3 9 bxc3 e5!
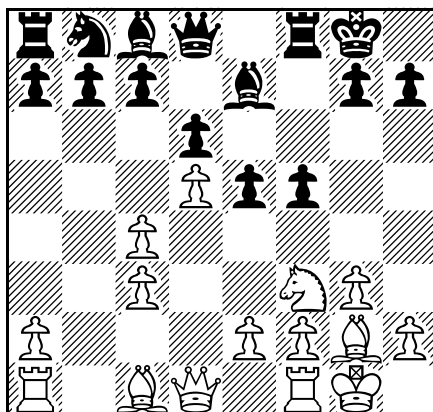
This is what we want: the pawns on f5 and e5 control the centre and give us chances to attack White's king.

10 e4 f4!

Another thematic move. The pawn appearing on f4 will always give Black some attacking chances.

11 ♖b1 ♘a6 12 ♘e1 ♕e8!

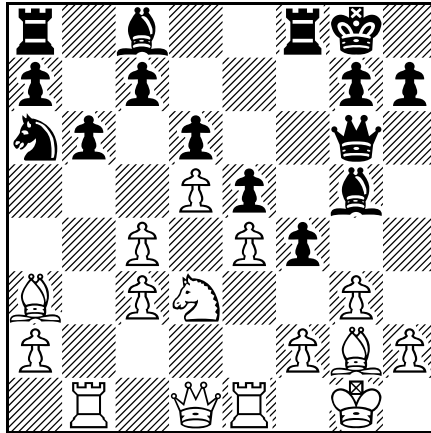A switch to the kingside, and yet another reason to enjoy playing the Dutch.

13 ♘d3 ♕g6?!

13...g5!? is by no means crazy. Why not simply support the pawn on f4?

14 ♖e1

14 gxf4 was the key test, but do remember it was a blitz game. Then 14...♗h3 can be answered by 15 ♕f3.

14...♗g5 15 ♗a3 b6!

Locking down poor White's pawns on c3 and c4.

16 ♗c1 ♗h6 17 a4 ♗g4 18 f3 ♗d7 19 g4 ♗g5 20 ♖e2 h5! 21 h3 ♗h4 22 ♗d2 ♔f7 23 ♖a1 ♖h8 24 ♗e1 hxg4 25 hxg4 ♗e7

25...♗xe1 26 ♕xe1 ♕h6! was the way to go.

26 a5 ♕h6 27 axb6 axb6 28 ♘b4 ♕h2+ 29 ♔f1 ♘c5 30 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 31 ♗f2 ♗a4 32 ♕b1 ♗b3 33 ♗g1 ♕h4 34 ♖b2?
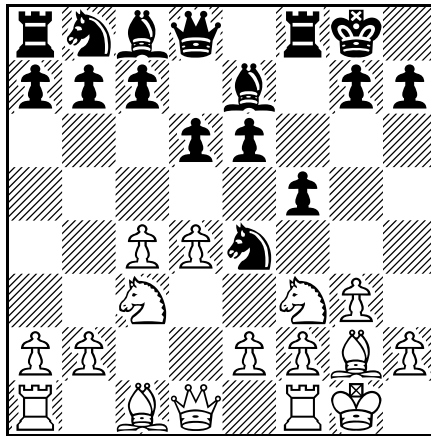
34 ♗f2 had to be tried.

34...♗xc4+ 0-1

Chapter Three
The Main Line: 7 ♘c3 ♘e4

1 d4 f5 2 g3 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♘c3 ♘e4

It's time to turn our attention to an in-depth look at the key components of our Classical Dutch repertoire, beginning with the main line itself. We'll begin with a nice game where Black plays all the correct ideas in the opening. It is well worth being aware of the general plans and key concepts for both sides, as you are bound to face the lines we'll see in this chapter many times in your Dutch journey.

Game 9
V.Babula-S.Svoboda
Slovakian League 2016

**1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 ♘f3 d6 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♘c3 ♘e4 8 ♕c2**

By far the most common response. When learning 7...♘e4 make sure you start by understanding this move as much as possible! When I play 7...♘e4 in blitz games online I would guess that about 80% of my strong opponents play 8 ♕c2, despite 8 ♘xe4! fxe4 being much more complicated and theoretically worrying.

8...♘xc3 9 bxc3

White allows some damage to his pawns, but keeps the queen on c2 to help prepare the advance e2-e4.

9 ♕xc3 is the other main option, when we will look at both 9...a5 and 9...♗f6. I like the move 9...a5, but some people might be put off by the subsequent endgame (10 b3 ♗f6 11 ♗b2 ♘c6 12 ♕d2 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♕d5+!), which is OK for Black, yet not to everyone's taste. After 9 ♕xc3 the alternative is 9...♗f6!?, but this also has a drawback, namely 10 b4! when White gains space on the queenside.

9...♘c6!
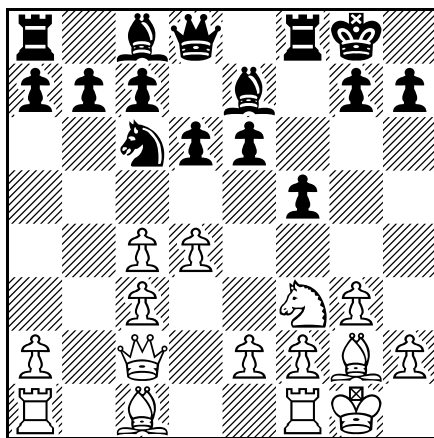
As we have already seen, a basic rule in the Classical Dutch is: Black must aim to meet e4 with ...e5 or ...f4. This move prepares ...e5.

10 d5

Nearly always the move to watch out for when Black plays ...♘c6. It is worth noting too the following rule: when White has doubled c-pawns, his meeting ...♘c6 with d4-d5 generally becomes a lot less worrying for Black. This is because ...♘a5 is a good response that takes aims at these weak pawns on the c-file.

Instead, 10 e4 e5! is looked at in the theory section below.

10...♘a5! 11 ♕a4

The most testing continuation, otherwise Black will be able to play 11...e5!, with an advantage in the centre and with the better pawn structure, such as after 11 ♘d2?! e5.
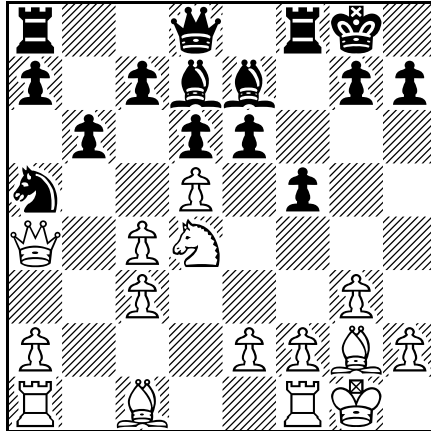
11...b6

Following my suggestion from *The Killer Dutch*. 11...c5 is also interesting.

12 ♘d4

Again the most natural and logical move. Instead, 12 dxe6 ♗xe6! 13 ♘d4 ♗xc4 14 ♗xa8 ♕xa8 is a sacrifice that I have been eager to try, but no one has allowed me to yet!
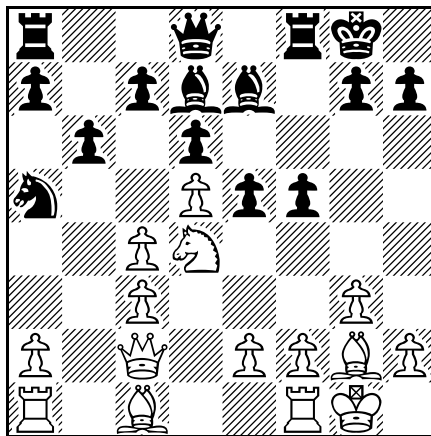
12...♗d7

12...e5 is also OK.

13 ♕c2

13 ♘c6 ♗xc6 14 dxc6 reaches a strange position where White's pawns are horrible.

13...e5!

Black is taking control with simple and logical moves. The ...e5 advance must, of course, usually be played at some point.

14 ♘c6 ♘xc6 15 dxc6 ♗e6

This position must favour Black. He has played ...e5 and ...f5 whilst maintaining the better pawn structure.

16 ♗d5 ♗xd5
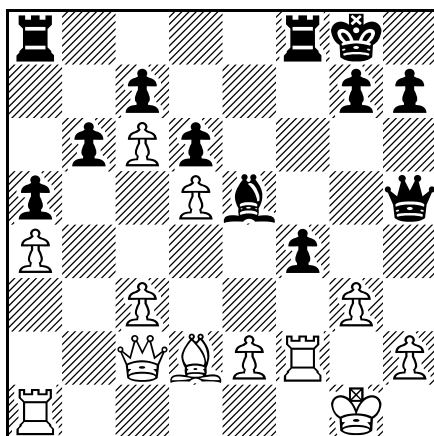
Or even 16...♕c8!?.

17 cxd5 ♕e8!

Simple and good. The queen swings over to the kingside via h5, which is another main idea in the Dutch.

18 a4 a5

Stopping any pawn breaks.

19 f4 ♗f6 20 ♗d2 ♕h5 21 fxe5 ♗xe5 22 ♖f2 f4!

Crashing through.

23 g4

Black is also doing very well after 23 gxf4 ♗xf4 24 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 25 ♖xf4 ♕g5+ 26 ♔h1 ♕xf4.

23...♕xg4+ 24 ♔h1 f3 25 ♕d3 ♕h4 26 ♔g1 ♗xh2+! 0-1

Now let's take a look at maybe the most common continuation that you will encounter, the most common one when White does not know the theory, so plays simple and sensible looking moves. This is one of the main attractions of 7...♘e4: White will often just drift into a worse position without really appreciating why.
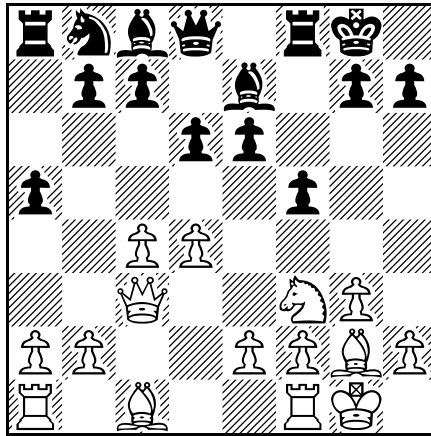
1 d4 e6 2 ♘f3 f5 3 c4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7

When the knight moves to c3 early on, 4...♗b4!? is another way of playing that I like.

5 g3 0-0 6 ♗g2 d6 7 0-0 ♘e4! 8 ♕d3 ♘xc3 9 ♕xc3

Here we are with a position that you will often reach.

9...a5

Stopping White from expanding with b2-b4. Black now has a very simple and effective plan of ...♗f6, ...♘c6 and ...e5.

10 b3

This is also what most people play.

10...♘c6

10...♗f6 is fine as well. The move order does not matter.

11 ♗b2 ♗f6 12 ♖ad1?!

This natural move just helps Black, who wants to move the queen to a better square anyway. A better try would have been 12 ♕d2! when 12...e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♕d5+! 1♔h8 15 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 16 ♖fd1 reaches the key position for this variation.

12...♕e7

The only dilemma Black has is if the queen should move to e7 or e8. From e8 it can travel over to h5 later, yet e7 controls the a3-f8 diagonal.

12...♕e8!? 13 ♕d2 e5 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 e4 f4!? 16 h3 (16 gxf4 exf4 17 e5 ♗d8 is the type of position that I love playing) 16...♗e6 17 ♕e2 ♕g6 18 g4 ♖ae8 was agreed drawn in Gladyszev-R.Pert, Montpellier 2003.
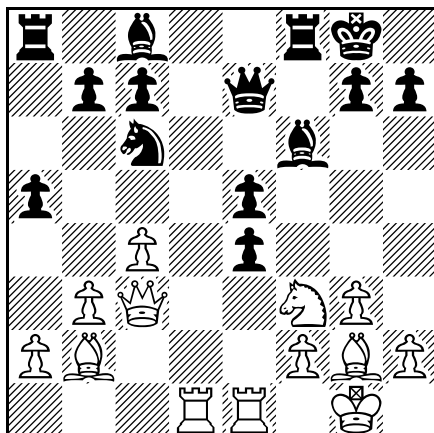
13 ♖fe1 e5!

Everything is going according to plan.

14 dxe5 dxe5

You should always aim to recapture with the d-pawn if you can.

15 e4 fxe4!

With the queen on e7, this is nearly always the correct way to play. 15...f4?! does not work as well because of 16 gxf4! exf4 17 e5!, whereas this type of idea is playable with the queen on e8 as then Black's dark-squared bishop can drop back to e7 or d8.

16 ♘d2

Sidestepping 16 ♖xe4?! ♗f5! 17 ♖ee1 e4!.

16...♗g4

Active play and very much the Classical Dutch in action.

17 ♖a1 ♘d4! 18 ♔f1?

Very strange and passive. White should have tried 18 ♘xe4! with the idea of 18...♘e2+ (18...♖ad8!?) 19 ♖xe2 ♗xe2 20 ♕e3 ♗g4 21 ♘xf6+ gxf6 22 ♗xb7, with decent compensation.
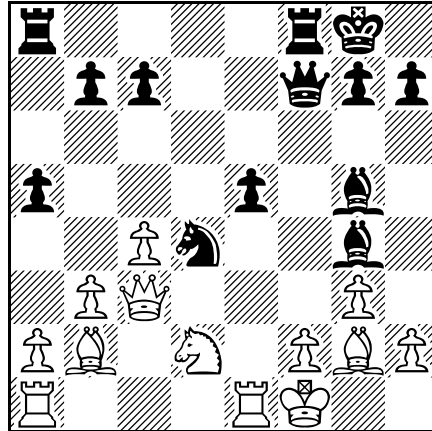
18...e3?!

18...♕f7! was even stronger, and if 19 ♘xe4 ♗e7 20 c5 ♘f3.

19 ♖xe3 ♗g5 20 ♖ee1

20 f4! was the only try when I was intending 20...♗f6! rather than 20...♗xf4?! 21 gxf4 ♕g5.

20...♕f7

Black's pressure is already decisive.

21 ♗d5 ♗xd2!

Crushing.

22 ♕d3

If 22 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 23 ♕xd2 ♗h3+ 24 ♔g1 ♘f3+ or 22 ♕xd2 ♗h3+ 23 ♔g1 ♕xd5! 24 cxd5 ♘f3+ 25 ♔h1 ♘xd2 and wins.

22...♗e6 23 ♕xd2 ♗h3+ 24 ♔g1 ♕xd5 0-1

In the next game we will take a look at some of the main ideas that Black has in the critical variation with 8 ♘xe4 fxe4.

Game 11
S.Kojima-S.Williams
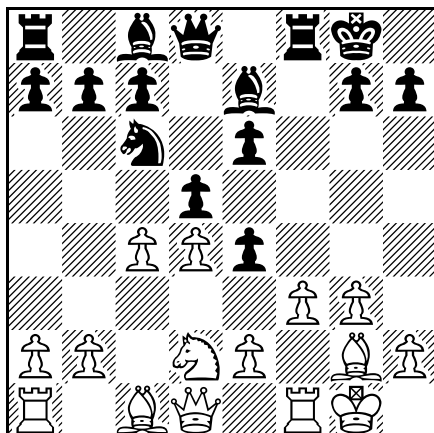London Chess Classic Open 2012

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1 ♘f3 f5 2 d4 e6 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♘c3 ♘e4 8 ♘xe4!

The only way for White to aim for an advantage.

8...fxe4 9 ♘d2

Critically hitting e4 and keeping the knight active.

9...d5 10 f3 ♘c6!

Black must play this active move otherwise he is just worse, as is the case after 10...exf3 11 ♘xf3.
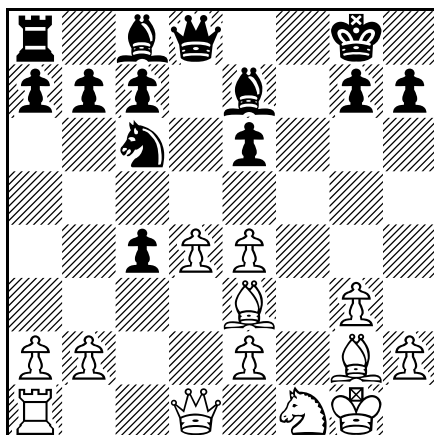
11 fxe4

11 e3!? is a safe way that White can aim for an edge. This is examined later on.

11...♖xf1+ 12 ♘xf1

12 ♔xf1!? is the current trend. We'll take a look at this in the theory section.

12...dxc4 13 ♗e3

A more challenging choice than 13 e3?! e5!.

13...♗d7!

The bishop is very flexibly placed on d7 and depending on what White plays, it can come out via e8 and then head to either g6 or c6. Black should concentrate on active queenside play based around ...b5, ...♖b8, ...♘a5/...♘b4 and even ...♗c6.

14 e5

White has a number of other possibilities in this position. We will take a look at these in the theory section.

14...♗e8!
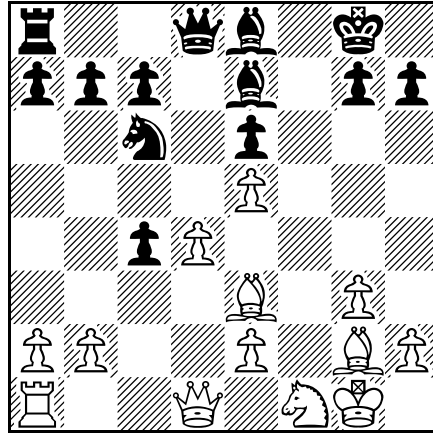
This is a good move. It has two main goals:

a) Increasing the pressure against White's d-pawn. Black can now play ...♕d7 and ...♖d8.

b) Black was weak on the b1-h7 diagonal and had to think of a way to meet ♗e4 and ♕c2. Now he can successfully meet this plan with ...♗g6.

15 ♖c1

Is Black's c-pawn strong or weak? In this game it turns out to be very strong.

15...b5

Black has ideas of using the queenside majority. A simple and strong plan for Black here is ...♖b8, ...♘b4, ...♗c6 and ...♘d5.

16 b3

This is a standard way of trying to break up Black's pawns on the queenside, but in this position Black has a typical idea that leaves him with a fine game.

16 ♗f2!? is interesting and quite similar to Hebden-Williams (Game 14), when 16...♖b8 would be the standard approach (there's also 16...♕d7!?), meaning that the knight on c6 can move, normally to b4. Indeed, 17 e4?! would allow Black's knight into a very strong square: 17...♘b4 with ...♘d3 to follow.

16...♗a3!
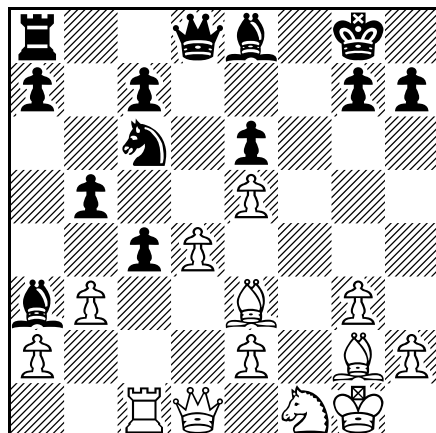
17 ♖c2?!

This is an error after which White gets into serious difficulties.

It would have been wiser to have sacrificed the exchange with 17 bxc4! At least this way White gains a slight initiative. Black is still doing well though: for example, 17...♗xc1 18 ♕xc1 ♖c8!. This is the best square for the rook for tactical reasons. It looks more natural to place the rook on b8 (18...♖b8?! is correct in principle, but runs into some slight problems after 19 cxb5 ♘xd4 20 ♕c4 when Black can no longer play ...c5; however, 18...♘xd4!? may also be OK for Black, and if 19 ♗xd4 ♕xd4+ 20 e3 ♕d8), but having the rook on c8 allows Black the option of playing ...c5 at some point. Black is now planning to play ...♘e7 and at the correct moment ...♗c6. Play might continue 19 ♕c3 (19 cxb5 ♘xd4 20 ♕c4 c5! reveals the reason why Black's rook is well placed on c8) 19...♘e7! 20 ♘d2 bxc4 21 ♕xc4 ♕d7 22 ♘b3 ♘d5!, with a slight edge to Black.

17...♖b8!

Preparing ...♘b4 and getting ready for the opening of the b-file.

18 bxc4

Or 18 ♗h3 ♔h8! 19 ♗xe6 ♗g6 (Black's bishops do a fantastic job) 20 ♖c3 ♘xe5!, taking advantage of the pin on the d-file. Black must be doing well here.
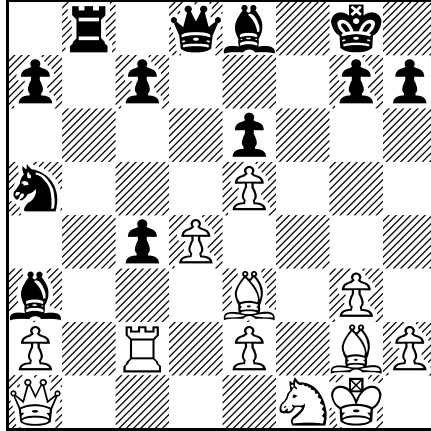
18...bxc4 19 ♕a1

Removing the queen from any tricks on the d-file. We have seen that Black was playing ...♘xe5 in a number of positions and this is not possible now.

19 ♖xc4 allows 19...♘xe5! 20 ♖c3 ♗b2 21 ♖b3 ♖xb3 22 axb3 ♘g4 when Black has serious pressure.

19...♘a5

Defending the c-pawn and threatening ...♗a4 in some positions. Black is very active, just as we want in this variation.

20 ♗d2?

An error which allows a tactical shot. It would have been better to have played 20 ♘d2, aiming to meet 20...♗g6 with 21 ♗e4. Black still holds an edge though after 21...♗xe4 22 ♘xe4 ♕d5 23 ♘c3 ♕d7 24 ♘e4 ♕a4!.

20...♗b2!

Taking advantage of some tactical tricks against the pawn on d4. The rest of the game just requires some care on my part and the point is mine.
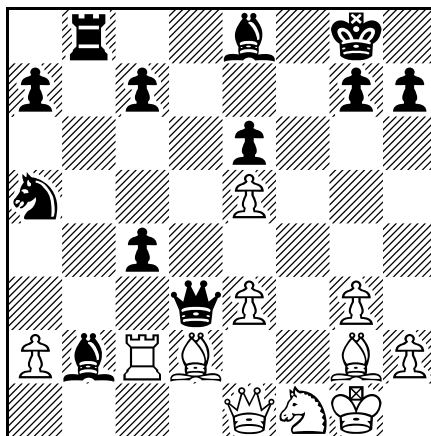
21 ♕e1

And not 21 ♖xb2? ♕xd4+ 22 e3 ♕xb2.

21...♕xd4+ 22 e3

Likewise, if 22 ♗e3 ♕xe5 23 ♗xa7 ♗d4+ 24 ♗xd4 ♕xd4+ 25 ♕f2 ♕d6 and Black has a big advantage or if 22 ♕f2 ♗g6.

22...♕d3!

The resulting position after some exchanges is winning for Black.

23 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 24 ♗xa5 ♖c2!

White is running out of moves. Most of his options lose material of some kind.

25 ♗f3 c3 26 ♕d1 ♕xd1 27 ♗xd1 ♖c1 28 ♗b3 ♗b5 29 ♗xe6+ ♔h8 30 ♗xc3 ♖xc3 31 ♗f7 ♖c1 0-1

Game 12
### C.Ward-N.Pert
British Championship, Hull 2018

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1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 0-0 d6 7 ♘c3 ♘e4 8 ♘xe4 fxe4 9 ♘d2 d5 10 f3 ♘c6 11 fxe4 ♖xf1+ 12 ♔xf1!?

The current trend. This is the main theoretical change that has happened since I wrote *The Killer Dutch*, as it doesn't seem that White is getting any advantage with 12 ♘xf1. In this line White wants to keep his knight for f3 and while the king on f1 is misplaced, it is not in a serious way. Later on it will move over to g1 and h1.

12...dxc4!

Again the correct way to proceed. 12...♘xd4 may look tempting, but White has the advantage after 13 cxd5 exd5 14 ♘b3! ♘xb3 15 ♕xb3.

13 ♘f3
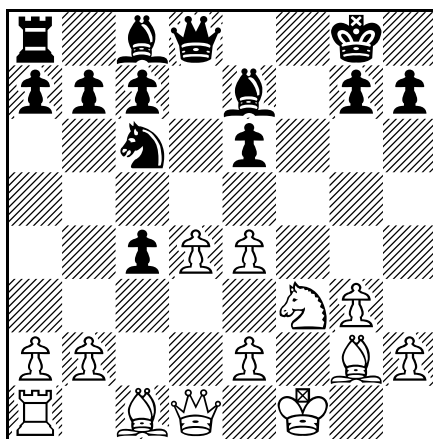
This has been suggested for White in numerous places and seems to be one of the main tests. Nick Pert is up to the challenge though.

13...b5

The normal way to play for Black on the queenside. The two moves to watch for after ...b5 are normally a2-a4 with pressure on the a-file, and e4-e5 with pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal.

14 ♗e3

Again *Komodo*'s first move choice. Chris was obviously well prepared.

14...a6

Black has a number of choices here which we will study in the theory section, with 14...♖b8 is our main suggestion.
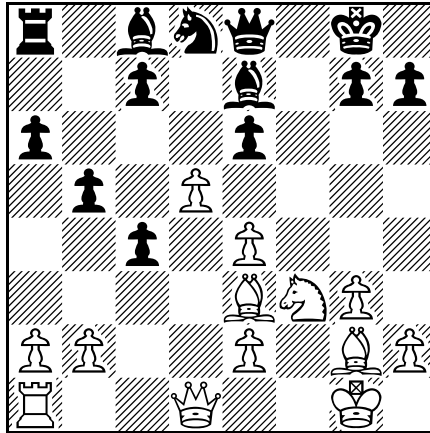
15 ♔g1 ♕e8!?

An interesting idea. Black vacates the d8-square.

16 d5!

Again the critical test.

16...♘d8

17 e5

Opening the diagonal. Very natural play from White, but only now does my computer start to like Black's position.

17 ♕d2!, keeping the tension, looks better in this highly strange position. Then 17...♗b7 18 ♖f1 exd5! 19 exd5 ♗b4! 20 ♕d4 ♘f7 reaches a very unbalanced position where *Komodo* assesses things as equal.

17...♗b7! 18 d6 cxd6 19 exd6 ♗f6

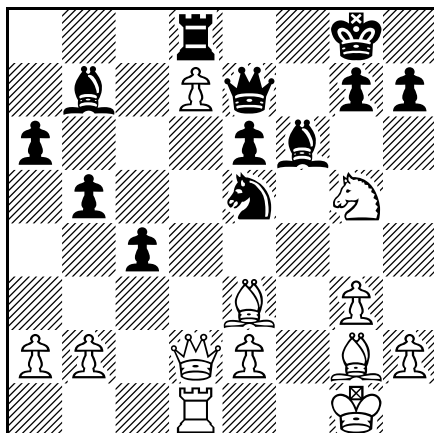Provocative play from Black, but things are OK.

20 ♕d2 ♘f7!?

Stopping the d-pawn with 20...♕d7 was a safer way to play.

21 d7 ♕e7 22 ♘g5 ♖d8

Or perhaps 22...♗d5!?.

23 ♖d1 ♘e5

Gradually Black has gained an edge. White's pawn on d7 is weak and ready for the picking.

24 ♘xh7 ♖xd7 25 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 26 ♕c1 ♖xd1+ 27 ♕xd1 ♗xg2 28 ♔xg2

A very nice endgame for Black. The queen and knight combine well and the majority of pawns on the queenside look more dangerous than White's kingside pawns. Nick went on to win in good style:

28...♘g4 29 ♕d4 ♘xe3+ 30 ♕xe3 b4 31 ♕e4 c3 32 bxc3 bxc3 33 ♕c4 a5 34 a4 ♕g6 35 e4 ♕e8 36 ♕xc3 ♕xa4 37 ♕c8+ ♔f7 38 ♕c7+ ♔g6 39 ♕e5 ♕a2+ 40 ♔f3 a4 41 h4 ♕b3+ 42 ♔f4 a3 43 g4 ♕b2 44 ♕h5+ ♔f6 45 e5+ ♔e7 46 ♕g5+ ♔d7 47 ♕xg7+ ♔c6 48 ♕a7 ♕d2+ 49 ♔g3 a2 50 ♕a6+ ♔c5 51 ♕a7+ ♔b4 52 ♕e7+ ♔a4 53 ♕e8+ ♔a3 54 ♕a8+ ♔b2 55 ♕b7+ ♔c2 0-1

I had to include the next game by my good friend Gary O'Grady against former Women's World Champion, Antoaneta Stefanova, for a couple of reasons. First of all Black, who was out-rated by some 600(!) Elo points, got a good position by following the theory from my earlier work, *The Killer Dutch*. Not just that, but Black found a very interesting middlegame plan that is worth remembering. It goes to show that the Dutch can be a great weapon even when facing Goliath!

Game 13
A.Stefanova-G.O'Grady
4NCL (British League) 2015

1 ♘f3 e6

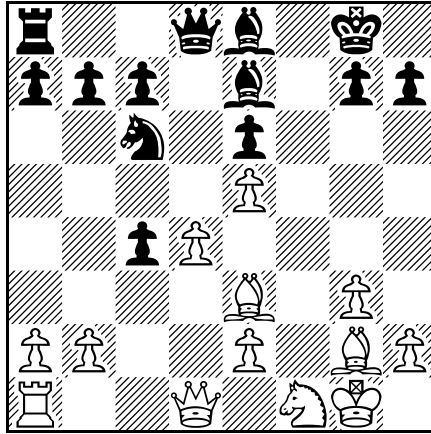I would prefer the move order 1...f5 which is looked at in detail in this book.

2 g3 f5 3 c4 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗e7 5 0-0 0-0 6 d4 d6 7 ♘c3 ♘e4

Back into the main line.

8 ♘xe4! fxe4 9 ♘d2 d5 10 f3 ♘c6! 11 fxe4 ♖xf1+ 12 ♘xf1

The older choice rather than Ward's 12 ♔xf1.

12...dxc4 13 ♗e3 ♗d7! 14 e5 ♗e8!

A nice idea. The bishop can come around to either g6 or h5, while Black opens up the queen on d8 against the white pawn on d4.

15 ♖c1

Just like we saw in Kojima-Williams (Game 11), White plays a natural move, placing pressure on c4.

15...♖b8!?

An intriguing idea. Black plays a useful waiting move, while still preparing ...b5. The immediate 15...b5 was my earlier choice, but Gary shows that there is another way to play.

16 ♗e4

Another move that White often tries. It should be noted that this can often be met by ...♗g6.

16 ♖xc4! would have been the critical test. As White, I would have also been in a hurry to eliminate that pawn on c4. Then 16...♘xe5 was Black's idea, using the pin, when 17 ♖c1 ♘g4 18 ♗f4 ♗d6 19 ♗xd6 cxd6 20 e4 gains space, but Black has no difficulties after 20...♘f6.

16...b5

Expanding, but there was also a good case for 16...♗g6!? 17 ♗xg6 hxg6 18 ♕c2 b5 19 ♖d1 ♕d5!? 20 ♕xg6 ♘xe5.

17 b3!?

The break often seems like a good positional move to play. White wants to eliminate the pawn on c4 and play along the open c-file.
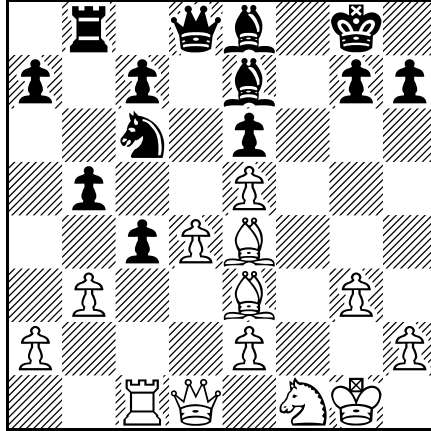
17...cxb3!?

A very imaginative idea. Black gives up a piece in order to create some very dangerous queenside pawns.

17...♗a3! would have again been my choice. As a rule, it is always worth trying to meet the move b3 with ...♗a3, as in my game against Kojima. After 18 ♖b1 c3! 19 ♕d3 ♗b2 20 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 White has won a pawn, but Black's passed c-pawn supplies full compensation.

18 ♗xc6

Probably thinking along the lines of 'This patzer has just blundered, so it's time to finish him off.'

Instead, if 18 axb3 ♘b4 with ideas of ...♘d5 and ...♗g6, and with good control over the light squares.

18...♗xc6 19 ♖xc6 bxa2
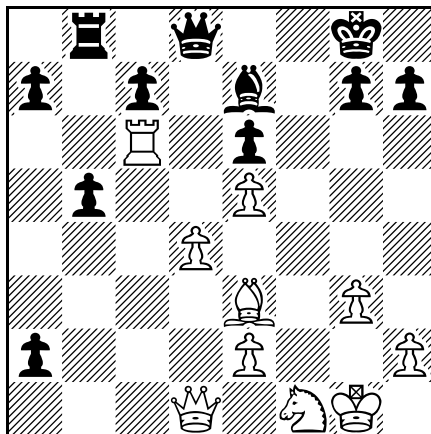
Does Black have enough for the piece? In this position my computer program does not

fully think so, but practically things are very tricky for White.

20 ♕a1

This looks correct, before Black can play ...b4 and ...b3.

20...b4

Onwards! Another line was 20...♕d5!? 21 ♖a6 b4 22 ♕xa2 b3 23 ♕b2.

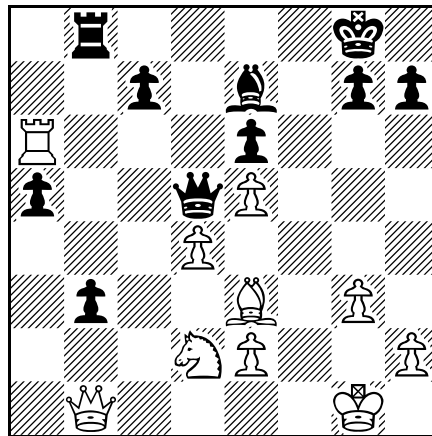**21 ♕xa2 b3 22 ♕b1 a5!**

Forwards!

23 ♖a6

Again very logical, trying to stop Black's pawns from advancing.

23...♕d5

A nice central square for the queen.

24 ♘d2!

A good manoeuvre as the knight comes around to b1.

24...♕b5?!

24...b2! was the best chance with a very interesting and unclear position. It is hard for either side to do anything and I expect a draw would have been a fair result. What should White actually play in this position? For example, 25 ♕d3, aiming for ♘b1, looks natural, but after 25...♗b4! 26 ♘b1 c5! 27 dxc5 ♗xc5 28 ♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 29 e3 ♕xe5 Black must be fine.

25 ♕d3 ♕d5 26 ♘b1!

Things start to get tricky for Black now.

26...♗b4 27 ♗d2 ♗xd2 28 ♕xd2 ♕e4 29 ♕d3 ♕b7 30 ♖xa5

White now goes on to win, but in any case this was a very interesting idea from Gary.

30...b2 31 ♖a3 ♕b4 32 ♕c3 ♕b7 33 ♕c4 ♕e4 34 ♕d3 ♕c6 35 ♖c3 ♕b6 36 ♕c4 ♕a7 37 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 38 ♖d3 c5 39 ♕c4 cxd4 40 ♕xd4 ♕c7 41 ♖c3 ♕f7 42 ♖f3 ♕c7 43 ♕d6 ♕c1+ 44 ♔g2 ♖g8 45 ♕d3 ♕c7 46 ♕e4 1-0