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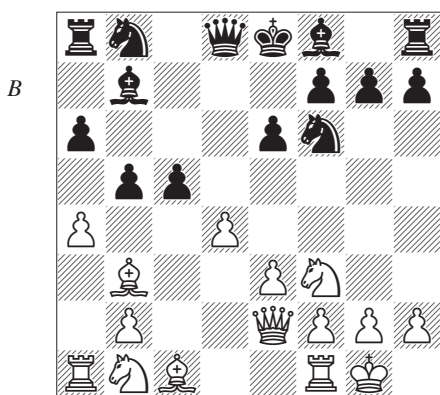
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10 Classical Variation: 7 ♔e2 b5

8 ♖b3 ♖b7 9 a4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5
6 0-0 a6 7 ♚e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7 9 a4 (D)



The Classical Variation with 9 a4 and the related move 9 ♗d1 (see Chapter 11) are the traditional main lines of the Queen's Gambit Accepted. One of the ideas behind 9 a4 is to attack the b5-pawn immediately with the aim of forcing Black to make a concession to defend the pawn. Black can respond by temporarily ignoring the attack and continuing his development (Line A), or he can relieve the tension by immediately advancing his b-pawn (Line B):

A: 9... ♗bd7 85
B: 9... b4 90

The difference in strategy often revolves around the placement of White's queen's knight – in Line A Black usually plays ...b4 after the white knight has already been developed on the c3-square and White responds by playing ♗b5, whereas in Line B the ...b4 advance takes away the c3-square from the white knight, so White responds by playing ♗d2-c4. The white knight on the b5-square (Line A) is more of a threat to Black's king because it attacks the c7-square

and leaves the a2-g8 diagonal open for White's light-squared bishop – in combination with the move ♗g5, this sets up various sacrificial possibilities on the e6-square. The risk for White is that the b5-knight can become stranded if a kingside attack fails to materialize.

East German GM Wolfgang Uhlmann was one of the early pioneers of the Classical Variation with 9 a4 during the late 1950s and early 1960s – his name is often associated with the variation. GMs Ivan Sokolov, Artur Yusupov and Robert Hübner (on both sides!) played some important games with the line during the 1990s and at the turn of the millennium Indian GM Krishnan Sashikiran picked up the gauntlet for White. The popularity of the variation has waned in recent years and interest from the white side has shifted to other lines, in particular the Central Variation (Chapter 2), the Furman Variation (Chapter 5), and the Classical Variation with 7 ♗b3 (Chapter 8).

A)

9... ♗bd7

Black continues his development and ignores the attack on the b5-pawn for a few moves. Now:

A1: 10 ♗d1 86
A2: 10 axb5 86

10 e4 cxd4 is rarely seen. Then:

a) 11 e5? ♗xf3 (11... ♗d5 12 axb5 d3! 13 ♚xd3 ♗c5 14 ♚d1 axb5 ♚ NCO) 12 gxf3 (12 ♚xf3 ♗xe5 13 ♚g3 ♗d6 →) 12...d3 (12... ♗c5 is also very strong) 13 ♚xd3 ♗xe5 14 ♚e2 ♗ed7 ♚ Piket-Seirawan, Monte Carlo Amber blindfold 1994.

b) 11 ♗xd4 ♗c5 12 ♗d1 ♚b6 13 a5 ♚a7 14 ♗e3 0-0 leads to equality, Guimard-Najdorf, Prague 1946.

A1)

10 ♖d1 ♗b8

An important alternative is 10...b4 – 9...b4
10 ♖d1 ♗bd7.

11 axb5 axb5 12 ♖xa8 ♙xa8 13 ♗c3

Black has no problems after 13 ♗bd2 ♙d6 =
Berberich-Raetsky, Lenk 1995.

13...b4

Now:

a) 14 ♗b1 ♙d6 15 ♗bd2 0-0 16 h3 cxd4 17
exd4 ♙f4 ♢ Temirbaev-Vaulin, Russia Cup
(Omsk) 1996.

b) 14 ♗a4 ♙e7 (14...cxd4 15 ♖xd4 ♙e7
{15...♙d6!}) 16 e4 0-0 = Levitt-Baburin, Bun-
ratty 2001) 15 e4 (15 dxc5 0-0 16 ♙d2 ♗xc5 =
Ftačnik) 15...cxd4 16 ♗xd4? (White should
settle for 16 ♖xd4 ♙c6 =) 16...♗xe4 17 ♙c4 0-0
(17...♙d6!?) 18 ♗xe6 (18 ♗f5 exf5 19 ♖xd7
♙d6! ♢ Namgilov-Ibragimov, Russian Ch (El-
ista) 1995 – White has lost a pawn and his rook
is trapped behind enemy lines) 18...fxe6 19
♖xd7 ♖xf7 20 ♗g4! (20 ♙xe6+ ♗h8 21 ♗g4
♗b5 –+ Ftačnik) 20...♗f8 21 ♙e3 ♙d5! and
then:

b1) 22 ♖xd5 exd5 23 ♙xd5+ ♗h8 24 ♗d1
♖d2 25 ♙xd2 ♙c5+ mates – Ftačnik.

b2) 22 ♖xe7 ♖c2 23 ♗d1 (23 ♙xd5 ♖c1+ 24
♙xc1 ♗f2+ 25 ♗h1 ♗f1# Ftačnik) 23...♙xc4
24 ♖d7 ♗f2 25 ♗b1 (25 ♖xc2 ♗h3+ mates)
25...b3 –+.

c) 14 ♗b5 ♙xf3! (14...♙e7 is unclear –
Ftačnik) 15 gxf3 cxd4 16 ♗xd4 ♙d6 with an
equal position.

A2)

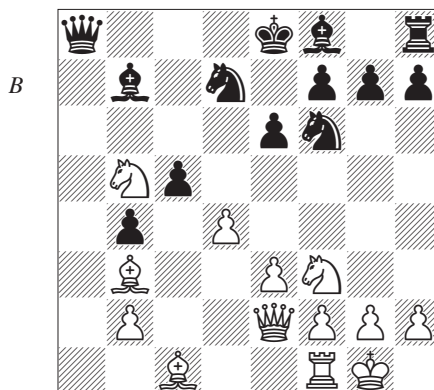
**10 axb5 axb5 11 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 12 ♗c3 b4 13
♗b5 (D)**

Black must choose between saddling White
with a set of doubled pawns or continuing his
development:

A21: 13...♙xf3!? 86

A22: 13...♗b8 88

Line A21 is an alternative variation that has
recently been out of fashion, whereas Line A22
is considered the main line. The older 13...♗a5
has been under theoretical pressure lately and I
don't consider it as reliable as the two lines se-
lected for our repertoire.

**A21)**

13...♙xf3!?

GM Yasser Seirawan introduced 13...♙xf3!?
in 1986 and his idea has been underestimated
and just doesn't get any respect. *ECO* (2nd ed.)
gave "13...♙xf3!" a column, *ECO* (3rd ed.)
gave "13...♙xf3" a footnote, and *ECO* (4th ed.)
doesn't even mention the move! During the
1990s the move 13...♙xf3!? was played by
some of the world's top grandmasters and the
theoretically recommended method of dealing
with it does not appear to be dangerous.

Let's review some of the main ideas behind
13...♙xf3!?: Black eliminates the dangerous
f3-knight and saddles White with a doubled f-
pawn at the cost of conceding the bishop-pair.
Black should concentrate on completing his de-
velopment, even at the cost of a pawn, in order
to avoid being overrun by White's bishops and
central pawn cluster. White must be careful
mobilizing his central pawns as a hasty advance
could result in weak d5-, e5- or f4-squares.

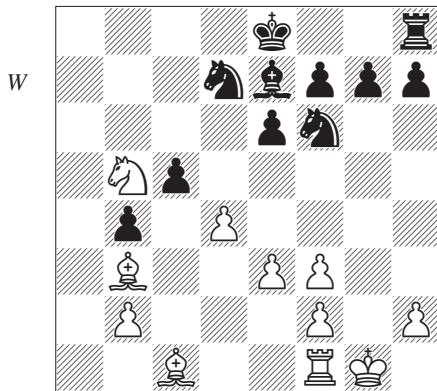
14 gxf3

White can also head straight for the endgame
by playing 14 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 15 gxf3 ♙e7 (D).

Several games have shown that Black has
nothing to fear in this endgame:

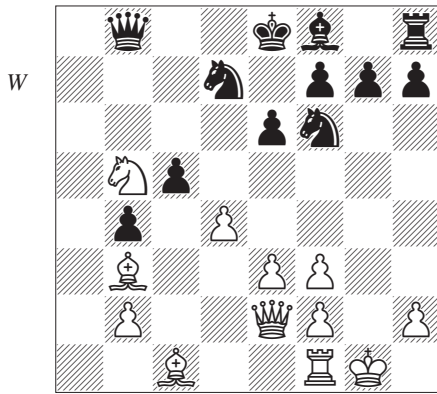
a) 16 ♗c7+ ♗d8 17 ♗b5 ♗c8 18 ♙d2 (18
dxc5 ♗xc5 19 ♙c2 ♖d8 20 ♗d4 ♗b7 = Dokh-
oian-Hübner, Bundesliga 1994/5) 18...♗b7 19
dxc5 ♙xc5 20 ♗d4 ♖d8 = Klimm-Brunner,
Bundesliga 1993/4.

b) 16 e4 0-0 17 ♙e3 cxd4 (17...♖b8! 18
♙c4 ♗f8 also leads to an equal position) 18
♗xd4 ♖a8 = Kiriakov-Donchenko, Moscow
1996.



c) 16 ♘d2 0-0 17 ♖c1 (17 ♖a1 ♖b8 18 ♘c4 e5 19 dxc5 ♘xc5 = Auger-Tait, corr. 1996) 17...♖a8 18 dxc5 ♘xc5 (18...♗xc5!?) 19 ♔f1 g6 20 ♔e2 ♗d5 21 ♘xd5 (several months earlier, Yusupov played 21 e4 ♗5b6 22 ♘h6 {22 f4!? ♖a5 23 ♗a3 ♔g7 =} 22...♖a5 23 ♗c7 ♘f8 = 1/2-1/2 Yusupov-Hübner, Munich 1994) 21...exd5 22 ♗c7 ♖a2 23 ♗xd5 ♖xb2 24 ♗f6+ ♗xf6 25 ♖xc5 ♔f8 26 ♖b5 b3 = Yusupov-Lautier, Horgen 1994.

14...♖b8 (D)



15 ♗d1

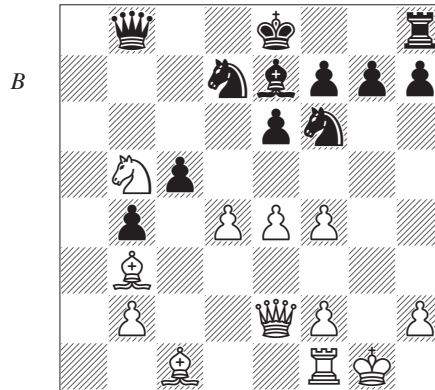
Alternatives:

a) 15 e4?! (White should refrain from playing this move until Black has spent a tempo on ...♘e7) 15...cxd4 16 ♗xd4 ♘d6 = Turner-Baburin, Kilkenny 1999. Black has been able to develop his bishop directly to the d6-square and he is a tempo ahead compared to the main-line position after Black's 17th move.

b) 15 ♘d2 1/2-1/2 Miles-Seirawan, Dubai OL 1986. This was the stem game of the variation,

although it was not much of a test. The early draw strategy worked for England as they defeated the United States 2 1/2-1 1/2.

c) 15 f4 ♘e7 16 e4 (D) and now:



c1) 16...♗b6 and then:

c11) 17 d5 c4 18 ♘xc4 exd5 19 exd5 ♗xc4 20 ♖xc4 0-0 21 ♗d4 (Djurhuus-Degerman, Reykjavik Z 1995 – ECO {3rd ed.} evaluated this position as “±”, but White's five isolated pawns do not inspire confidence) 21...♖c8! 22 ♖d3 ♖g4+ 23 ♔h1 ♖d7 24 ♗f5 ♖d8 25 ♖d1 ♘f8 and Black has good play for the pawn.

c12) 17 dxc5 ♘xc5 18 f5 0-0 (18...♖e5!? 19 fxe6 fxe6 20 ♘xe6 ♖f8 is unclear) 19 fxe6 fxe6 20 ♘xe6+ ♔h8 gives Black compensation for the pawn.

c2) 16...0-0 and here:

c21) 17 d5? exd5 18 e5 c4 ♠.

c22) 17 e5 ♗d5 18 f5 ♔h8 with equal chances.

c23) 17 f5 cxd4 18 ♗xd4 (18 fxe6? d3! ♠) 18...e5 19 ♗c6 ♖d6 with a balanced position.

15...♘e7 16 e4 cxd4

Black can also play 16...0-0 17 e5 ♗d5 18 ♘xd5 exd5 19 dxc5 ♗xc5 20 ♘f4 ♗xf3+ 21 ♖xf3 ♖xb5 = Piket-Lautier, Monte Carlo Amber blindfold 1995.

17 ♗xd4 ♘d6 (D)

18 e5!?

18 h3 0-0 19 ♖b5 (± Anand) 19...♖xb5 (Flear suggested 19...♖c8 “=”, but White can play 20 ♖xb8 ♘xb8 21 ♘d2 ♗c5 {21...♘d6? 22 ♗xe6! fxe6 23 ♘e3 ±} 22 ♘xb4 ♗xb3 23 ♗xb3 ♘e5 24 ♗a5!, preserving the b-pawn as 24...♘xb2? loses to 25 ♗c4 +-) 20 ♗xb5 ♘c5 21 ♗c7!? ♗e5 (21...♖c8? loses to 22 ♗xe6!)