



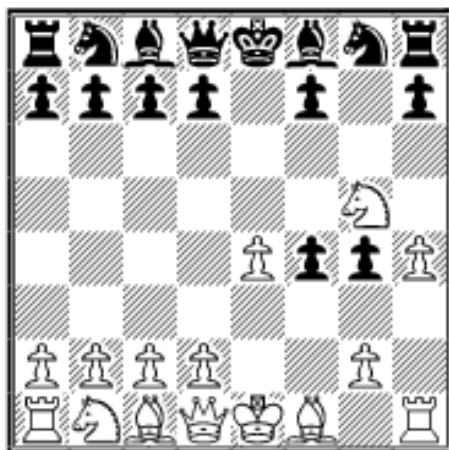
Not Quite Winning with the Allgaier Gambit

It is time for The Kibitzer to return to the field of opening theory. My topic for this month and the next is a much-despised but still-dangerous sideline of the ancient King's Gambit.

COLUMNISTS

The Allgaier Gambit arises after **1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5!?**.

The Kibitzer Tim Harding

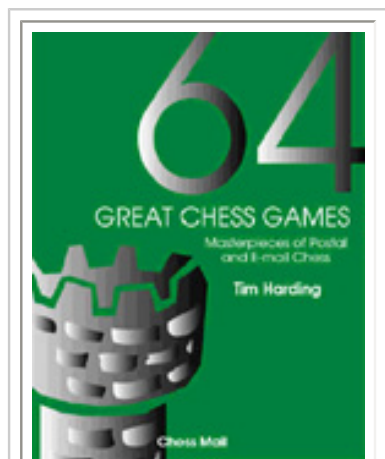


White is generally recommended in this opening to play 5 Ne5 (the Kieseritsky Gambit) but those players who defend the King's Gambit with the logical but old-fashioned 3...g5 are principally expecting that line. The Kieseritsky Gambit has been studied very deeply and unless you are willing to analyse deep

into the middle-game, you are not likely to find anything new. The earliest that a playable new move might be introduced is perhaps around move 10. So the Kieseritsky is well-suited to correspondence play but is not such a good bet for normal face-to-face or Internet contests unless you are an expert.

The Allgaier Gambit, I admit, is risky. I doubt if I would ever play it in a correspondence game or a FIDE-rated game at normal time limits.

On the other hand, it is ideally suited to rapid-play games on



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by Tim Harding

the Internet or in your chess club. In the main line — as we shall soon see — White is committed to a piece sacrifice, which draws the black King out into the open. Black is unlikely to expect this form of the King's Gambit and can quickly get a lost position unless he has memorised a good line (which is unlikely).

The plan for these articles is as follows. This month's column looks at the Allgaier from an historical and examines the main line from an ideas point of view.

Next month's column will look at Black's best defence and the ways in which he can avoid the main Knight sacrifice line. Any readers' feedback received by the end of November will be taken into consideration. If you have played an interesting game with or against the Allgaier, please send it in c/o **ChessCafe.com** (info@chesscafe.com).

Why play this gambit?

Let's take a look at the meaning of the early moves in the game.

1 e4 e5

White stakes a claim on the centre and prepares to develop his king's bishop. Black does the same.

2 f4 exf4

White offers a pawn to decrease Black's influence on the centre (especially d4); Black takes the bait.

3 Nf3

White prevents the queen check on h4 and gets a piece into play. If Black does nothing to stop it, White's next two moves will probably be 4 d4 and 5 Bxf4 to regain the gambit

pawn, after which White will play Bc4, 0-0 and have play down the half-open f-file.

Black's choice is to counter-attack in the centre (3...d5), develop and play positionally (3...Be7 or 3...Nf6) or try to hang on to the extra pawn.

3...g5



The classical move to retain the gambit pawn commits Black to falling behind on development for the sake of material and some spatial advantage on the kingside. On the other hand, White must now take a major decision about how he will try to justify his gambit.

Ideally, White would like his opponent to consume several tempi to win the king's knight, at the same time Black losing the integrity of his kingside pawn wall. The Allgaier Gambit and Muzio-Polerio Gambit (4 Bc4 g4) represent two different ways of trying to do this; the Rosentreter Gambit, 4 d4 (also inviting 4...g4) is a variant on the Muzio approach.

There are two main ways to go about offering the white Knight to shatter the black pawn wall. The problem with the Muzio-Polerio approach is that after 4 Bc4, Black is not obliged to play 4...g4?!. Instead, he can show another good point about Black's 3rd move: 4...Bg7! defends the h8-rook and activates the bishop on the long diagonal. Now if 5 h4 Black has 5...h6 (Philidor Gambit), while otherwise Black has a calm defensive plan with moves like...h6 (to reinforce the pawn chain), followed by...Nc6, ...d6 and ...Nf6 according to White's continuation. This is the Hanstein Gambit, where Black is comfortable. The black King may

eventually get to safety on the queenside.

Therefore, it is not good enough just to play a developing move and tempt...g4; Black may not take the bait. White needs to challenge the black pawn chain while the bishop is still on f8.

4 h4!

Since 4...gxh4 shatters Black's own pawns, the question is put to Black whether he can defend the g5-pawn, which in turn is the defender of the f4-pawn. Obviously 4...h6 is no good as after 5 hxg5 a recapture loses the rook.

4...f6? is met by 5 Nxg5! fxc5? 6 Qh5+ Ke7 7 Qxc5+ Ke8 8 Qh5+ Ke7 9 Qe5+ Kf7 10 Bc4+ with clear advantage to White and 4...Be7? 5 hxg5 Bxc5 is bad because of 7 d4 d6 7 g3 Bg4 8 gxff4 Bh4+ 9 kd2 favouring White. (Both those variations come from Schlechter's edition of the *Handbuch des Schachspiels*.)

Therefore Black has to play:

4...g4

Attacking the white Knight with tempo; now conservative players choose the Kieseritsky, 5 Ne5, but we choose:

5 Ng5

This move implies the offer of the knight, but it may be worth it because the black kingside pawn structure is utterly broken up in a few more moves. (In this position 5 Bc4 is not good; after 5...gxf3 6 Qxf3 Nc6 compared with the Muzio-Polerio, White has played h2-h4 instead of 0-0 and the difference is not in his favour.)

The Kieseritsky Gambit arises by 5 Ne5, with the idea that

5...d6 can be met by 6 N_xg4 with chances for both sides. Black's best defence then is probably 5...N_f6, to defend the g4-pawn. Then after 6 d4 (not the only possibility, but the principal one) comes 6...d6, which unlike Black's ...h6 in the Allgaier, is a constructive move, controlling important squares (e5 and c5) and facilitating the development of the c8-bishop. Current theory regards the chances as roughly equal.

5... h6

This move traps the Knight but weakens g6.

6 N_xf7 K_xf7

There goes the king's main defender and the black king is drawn out. Meanwhile the black pawns on g4 and f4 are ripe for plucking...

An example of the gambit in action

Let's start with an attractive and quite typical Allgaier win for White, where Black plays a line recommended at the time by theory, but is crushed.

Igor Glazkov – Soloviev Moscow, 1975

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 N_f3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 N_g5!?! h6

Black attacks the advanced Knight, which has no safe retreat. Of course, White has foreseen this and has tempted the move...h6 deliberately.

6 N_xf7 K_xf7

Black is now a piece up but his King has lost the right to castling and will face an attack in the open air. What should White play now?



7 Nc3!

This is the move that has revived the Allgaier. Inferior moves will be looked at below in the historical survey of the gambit.

7... Nc6

Black chooses to transpose into the Hampe-Allgaier Gambit, which can also arise from the Vienna (2 Nc3 Nc6 3 f4 exf4 etc.). Detailed discussion of this important “cousin” of the Allgaier is deferred to next month’s column as I need to research it more.

Black has several other possible moves, which will be examined later in this article.

8 d4 d5 9 Bxf4 Bb4 10 Be2 Bxc3+



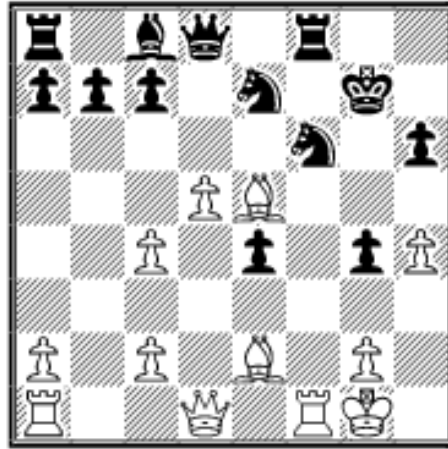
Referring to the coverage of the Hampe-Allgaier in one of the early editions of the *Encyclopaedia*, Glazkov and Estrin now remarked: “At this point, Larsen concludes the variation in ECO, giving clear preference to Black’s position. However, it is difficult to agree with this statement”.

11 bxc3 Nf6 12 0–0 Kg7

Showing the depth of his research, Glazkov now wrote: “Back in 1893, V.Trumberg sent Chigorin a detailed analysis of this position, which was published in the chess column of the newspaper *Novy Vremya*.”

13 c4! dxe4

Another critical line is 13...Nxe4, as we shall see next month.

14 d5 Ne7 15 Be5 Rf8

Glazkov comments: "Keres thought that in this position, Black could repulse the attack and retain his material advantage. The present game shows this evaluation to be incorrect".

To me, 15...Nf5 (not mentioned by Estrin and Glazkov) looks like a better defensive try.

16 Qd4! Ng6 17 Bxf6+ Rxf6 18 h5 Nf8 19 Rf4!

"This is the point! White increases the pressure, bringing all his pieces into the battle, whereas Black is forced to wait passively".

19...Nh7 20 Raf1 Bd7

20...Kf7 loses to 21 Qxe4.

21 Bxg4 Bxg4 22 Rxg4+ Kf7

If 22...Ng5 23 Qe5! threatens Rxg5+.

23 Qxe4 Rxf1+ 24 Kxf1 Ng5 25 Qg6+ Ke7 26 Qg7+ Nf7

Else Qxh6 wins.

27 Re4+ Kd6 28 Qg3+ Kc5 29 Qf2+ 1-0.

This game has influenced several theoreticians into believing the Hampe-Allgaier is good for White, but Black could have defended better. I am still analyzing the critical positions and I shall return to this line next month.

Who Was Allgaier?

The gambit which has gained the name of Allgaier was first mentioned in the literature by Domenico Lorenzo Ponziani (1719-96) from Modena in Italy, in his book *Il giuoco incomparabile degli scacchi* ('The incomparable game of chess', on page 134 of the second, 1782, edition).

In Walker's collection of games from the time of Philidor there are some games between Bruhl and an English player called Cotter. So for a time the variation was known in England as the Cotter Gambit.

Cotter – *Count J. Bruhl* London, 1788

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7 7 Qxg4?

It later became understood that 7 Qxg4? is bad because by exposing the queen to counter-attack, it gives Black time to further his development.

7...Nf6

7...Qf6 recommended later by La Bourdonnais, is weaker according to Schlechter 8 d4 Ne7 (8...Qxd4 9 Qxf4+ with a strong attack 9...Nf6 (9...Qf6 10 Qg4 Qg6 11 Bc4+ Kg7 12 Qf3 Qf6 13 Qg3+ Qg6 14 Qc3+ Qf6 and at the end of this amusing dance of the queens comes 15 e5±) 10 Nc3 Bb4 11 Bd3 Bxc3+ 12 bxc3 Qxc3+ 13 Ke2 Qxa1 14 e5) 9 e5 Qf5 10 Bc4+ Ke8 11 Qf3 Nbc6 12 c3 d6 13 exd6 cxd6 14 Bxf4 d5 15 Bd3 Qf7. Here Schlechter considered the chances equal: White has two pawns and a good position for the piece.

8 Qxf4



8...d6

8...Bd6 (attributed to Horny, 1828) is the book recommendation nowadays, e.g. 9 Qf3 Nc6 with clear advantage to Black says the *Soviet Encyclopaedia* 10 c3 Ne5 11 Qf2 Neg4 12 Qf3 Qe7 13 d3 Qe5μ analysis given by

Schlechter in the *Handbuch* (8th edition).

9 Bc4+ Be6 10 Bxe6+ Kxe6 11 0-0 Nbd7

Black faces problems due to his backward development and the pressure on the f-file. 11...Nc6 was possibly better.

12 d4 Ke7?

Now White wins back the piece with a clearly won game.

13 e5 dxe5 14 dxe5 Bg7 15 exf6+ Nxf6 16 Nc3 a5 17 Be3 Re8 18 Nb5 Kf7 19 Nxc7 Rxe3 20 Nxa8 Re7 21 Qc4+ Kg6 22 Qd3+ Qxd3 23 cxd3

White has a decisive material advantage in the endgame.

23...Nd5 24 Rac1 Bxb2 25 Rb1 Bd4+ 26 Kh1 Re8 27 Rb5 Rd8 28 Rxa5 Ne3 29 h5+ Kg7 30 Rc1 Ng4 31 Nc7 Nf2+ 32 Kh2 Ng4+ 33 Kg3 Bf2+ 34 Kxg4 1-0

The credit for popularising the opening, however, went to a later player. Johann Baptist Allgaier (1763-1823) was born on June 19, 1763 in Schussenrid, Germany, and died in Vienna in 1823. (His date of death is given in the *Soviet*

Encyclopaedia as January 3 but in Golombek's reference work as January 2.)

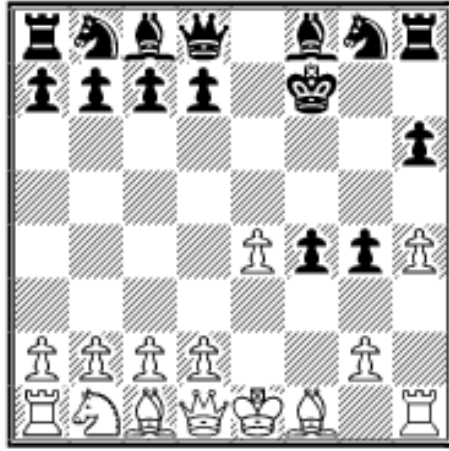
He was one of the leading Austrian players of the late 18th and early 19th centuries and his book, *Neue theoretisch-praktische Anweisung zum Schachspiel* ('New theoretical-practical instruction on the game of chess') first appeared in two volumes in Vienna in 1795-6. It went through seven editions, the last in the 1840s when he was long dead. Specifically it was his edition of 1819 in which Allgaier investigated this gambit.

He is remembered as one of the strong masters who played concealed within the hoax automaton 'The Turk'. In the year 1809, employed the Bavarian showman Johann Malezel who owned The Turk at this time, Allgaier operated the automaton against Napoleon Bonaparte in Vienna. Napoleon captured Vienna and defeated the combined armies of the Austrian and Russian empires at Austerlitz, but he could not defeat Allgaier and The Turk.

Allgaier presumably got the variation named after him because he published more extensive analysis of 5 Ng5 than anybody had done before. Ponziani analysed the weak reply 5...d5? 6 exd5 (creating a retreat square for the Knight on e4) 6...Nf6 when White gets good chances with Keres's move 7 Nc3!, so the knight sacrifice analysed by Allgaier is probably more critical. However, we shall see later that this is not the last word on 5...d5.

What do the old books say?

Coverage in the literature tends to focus on the position after the knight sacrifice has been accepted, i.e., the line we have just looked at, following **1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5!?** **h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7**



Since we have seen that 7 Qxg4 is bad, this means that if White is to justify his sacrifice he must mobilize his minor pieces first. The possible improvements are 7 Nc3 (as in the Glazkov game), 7 d4 and 7 Bc4+.

The obvious move is 7 Bc4+ but Black replies 7...d5 (returning a pawn to gain a tempo) 8 Bxd5+ and now there are two ways for the King to go. I will give a game to illustrate each choice.

If the king stays in the centre, here is a classic example.

Amos Burn – G.A. MacDonnell London, 1862

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7 7 Bc4+ d5 8 Bxd5+ Ke8

The King is back home but remember that he can never castle.

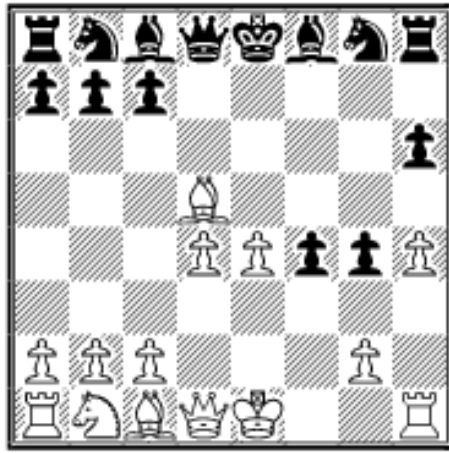
9 d4 Ne7? 10 Nc3 Nxd5 11 Nxd5 f3 12 gxf3 Be7 13 Be3 Bxh4+ 14 Kd2 c6 15 Rxh4 cxd5 16 Qh1 Qb6 17 b3 Na6 18 Rh5 Bd7 19 Qh4 Kf7 20 fxg4 Qf6 21 Qh3 Kg7

Diagram

22 g5! Qe6 23 gxh6+ Kh7 24 Rg1 Rhd8 25 Rg7+ Kh8 26 Qg3 Qxe4 27 Re5

And White won. Not now 27...Qh1? 28 Rh7+ Kxh7 29 Qg7#.

However, Black can do better, if we return to the position after 9 d4 in the Burn-MacDonnell game.



Instead of 9...Ne7, Black can also consider:

a) 9...f3 10 gxf3 Nf6 11 Nc3 Bb4 12 Bb3! Nc6 13 Be3 gxf3 (so far 19th century analysis) 14 Qd3! gives White good chances according to Keres.

b) 9...Nf6! (This move does not appear in the 1922 edition of the '*Handbuch*'.) 10 Nc3 Nh5 11 0-0 c6 and now:

b1) The books give 12 Bb3 Bg7! (12...Qxh4 is bad because of 13 Bxf4 according to Estrin & Glazkov.) 14 e5 Rf8 14 Ne4 Qxh4 15 Nd6+ Kd7! when Estrin & Glazkov's 1984 monograph cites Shabelsky as saying Black is winning.

b2) Rudolf Spielmann played 12 Qd3!? instead, targeting the g6 weakness and starting to prepare queenside castling. If 12...Ng3 the reply 13 Rh2 is forced but the position is quite murky.

If the king moves to the kingside, this can happen.

A. Levin – Bilenkin Kiev, 1891

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7 7 Bc4+ d5 8 Bxd5+ Kg7 9 d4

19th century players examined the second piece sacrifice 9 Bxb7?! Bxb7 (Zukertort's 9...f3 leads after 10 Bxc8 to roughly equal chances, according to Schlechter.) 10 Qxg4+ and concluded it was unsound, e.g. 10...Kf7 11 Qh5+ Ke7 (White can draw after 11...Kg7) 12 Qe5+ Kd7 13 Qxh8 Nf6 although some complications can still arise after 14 b3 (Dr. Schmid) 14...Bxe4 (analysed by Schlechter) or 14 e5 Bxg2 (Dufresne).

9...f3

This pawn advance is a standard tactic for Black in the Allgaier but timing is important. In this position, it was recommended by Staunton in 1860.

It is important to note that the same position can arise via 7 d4 (instead of 7 Bc4+) 7...f3!? 8 Bc4+ d5 9 Bxd5+ Kg7 which is the recommended line for Black against the Allgaier in some important theory books.

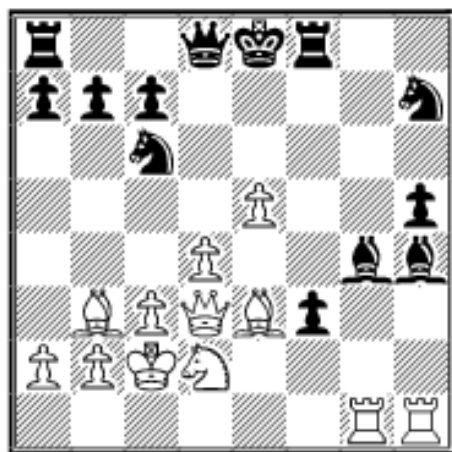
10 gxf3 Be7 11 Qd3

11 Be3 Bxh4+ 12 Kd2 also gives White good chances according to Schlechter.

11...Bxh4+ 12 Kd1 Nf6 13 Bb3 Nh7

13...Nh5 was stronger said Schlechter in the *Handbuch*.

14 Be3 gxf3 15 Nd2 Bg4 16 c3 h5 17 Kc2 Nc6 18 e5 Rf8 19 Rag1



19...Bg5?

Black cracks under the pressure. He actually should stand better here. The correct defence was 19...Nxe5! 20 dxe5 Qxd3+ 21 Kxd3 Rad8+ 22 Kc2 f2 23 Rf1 Bg5 (*Handbuch*).

20 Rxg4 Nxe5 21 Qxh7+ Kxh7 22 Rxh5+ Kg7 23 dxe5 Rf5 24 Bxg5 1-0

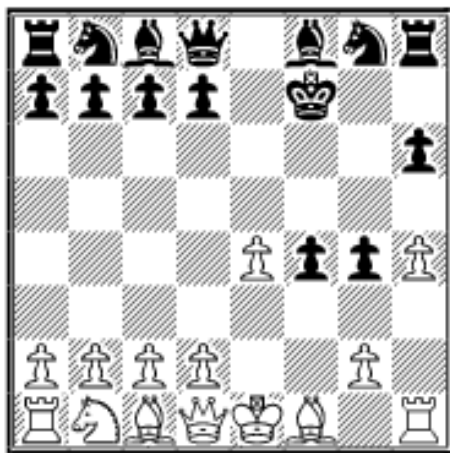
Nevertheless, modern theory recommends the 8...Kg7 line for Black. After 9 d4 f3! 10 gxf3 Nf6 (instead of 10...Be7 as in Levin-Bilenkin) it is doubtful whether White has a playable game. For example:

a) 11 Bb3 Nc6 12 c3 when ECO recommended 12...Qd6! 13 e5 Nxe5! 14 dxe5 Qxe5+.

b) 11 Nc3 Bb4 (“with clear advantage to Black” says Gallagher in ‘NCO’) 12 Bc4 gxf3 13 Rg1+ Ng4 14 Qxf3 Qxh4+ 15 Rg3 Rf8 16 Bf4 (following a consultation game Fleissig & Marco v Schlechter & Fahndrich, played in Vienna, 1903). Now after 16...Be7! (given by Schlechter) the book by Estrin and Glazkov, among others, says Black has the better chances.

Try Again For White...

Let’s go back to the position after **1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7.**



It seems that 7 Qxg4 is bad and 7 Bc4+ cannot be recommended either; therefore 7 d4 and 7 Nc3 remain as the moves for White to take seriously. In reply to those, the move ...d5 does not threaten a piece, so that White can get the attack moving. However, which of those moves is the better and does White get enough play?

The advantage of 7 d4 is that it controls the square e5 and immediately threatens Bxf4; on the other hand, 7 Nc3 makes the freeing move ...d5 harder and gets another piece out.

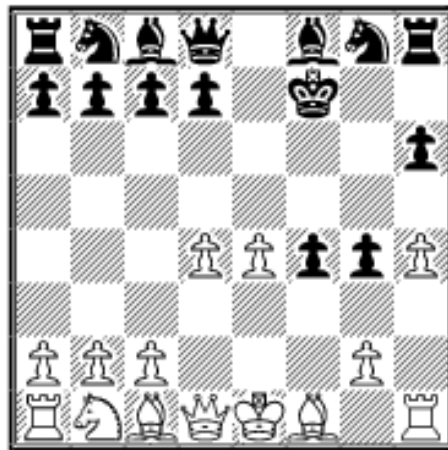
In the diagram position after Black’s 6th, experts tend to be cautious in expressing an opinion. For example, GM Paul Keres said in *Dreispringerspiel bis Königsgambit* (‘Three Knights Game to King’s Gambit’, Sportsverlag, Berlin 1968):

“The Allgaier Gambit continuation... is much riskier than

the Kieseritsky Gambit... Whether after the acceptance of the offer on f7 the attacking possibilities outweigh the piece is difficult to say with absolute certainty. However, one inclines to the opinion that eventually the defence should triumph”.

In his book on the King’s Gambit a few years ago, GM Joe Gallagher wrote that: “I have to admit that I have a certain weakness for the Allgaier Gambit, and it is with a heavy heart that I inform you that my attempts to rehabilitate the line have not been rewarded”, but he doesn’t say what he thinks the refutation is. (You can find his recommendation for Black in NCO.)

Let us look at 7 d4 first.



(after 1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7 7 d4)

Sometimes 7...d6 has now been seen.

When there is a big disparity in the strength of the players, you can get crushing wins like this.

Isidor Gunsberg – W. Ballard London, 1889

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7 7 d4 d6 8 Bc4+ Kg6?! 9 Bxf4 Nf6 10 Qd3 Qe8 11 Nc3 Nc6 12 h5+ Nxh5 13 Rxh5 Nb4 14 Qe2 Kxh5 15 a3 Nc6 16 0–0–0 Kg6 17 Nd5 Rh7 18 e5 Rf7 19 Bd3+ Kg7 20 Nf6 Qe7 21 Bxh6+ Kh8 22 Bxf8 Qxf8 23 Rh1+ Kg7 24 Rh7# 1–0

Of course that was not exemplary play by Black!

7 d4 d5

In practice, this has usually been played but I will look at the important alternative 7...f3 afterwards.

Estrin and Glazkov, in the 1982 English (Pergamon Press) edition of their monograph were more encouraging for White than Keres and Gallagher. They give the main line as:

8 Bxf4 Nf6

8...dxe4 is also known, but Estrin & Glazkov regard this as anti-positional. They recommend White to reply 9 Bc4+ but there is a serious problem with their main line.

a) 9...Kg7 (not mentioned by them) should be good for White e.g. **10 Be5+!** (W.Cook, *Synopsis of the Chess Openings*, 1882) 10...Nf6 with at least two promising lines for White here:

a1) 11 0-0 Be7 12 Nc3! Nc6 13 Nxe4 Nxe5 14 Nxf6 Nxc4 15 Nh5+ Kg6 16 Qd3+ Kxh5 17 Rf5+ Bxf5 18 Qxf5+ Bg5 19 Qf7+ Kxh4 20 g3+ Kxg3 21 Qf2+ Kh3 22 Qh2# (a game won in 1909 by Taubenhau against an unnamed opponent in Paris).

a2) 11 Rf1 Be7 12 Qe2 Nc6 13 Nd2 Nxe5 14 dxe5 Nd5 15 Nxe4 Bxh4+ 16 g3 Be7 17 0-0-0 c6 18 Nf6 Be6 (18 ..Rf8 19 Nh5+ Kh8 20 e6) 19 Nh5+ Kg8 20 Qe4 Bg5+ 21 Kb1 Qe8 22 Rf6! Qxh5 23 Rxe6 Kg7 24 Bd3 Ne7 25 Re1 Qf7 26 Rxe7! Bxe7 27 e6 with a big advantage to White in a Spanish intercity correspondence match, Vigo-La Coruña, 1904.

b) 9...Kg6! (Zukertort) 10 Nc3 (“with the idea of 0-0 and a fine attacking position — Schlechter, *Handbuch* 1922) 10...Nf6 11 h5+ Kh7 12 Qe2 “Followed by 0-0-0 and White obtains a very strong attack” claimed Estrin & Glazkov, citing a Marco-Schlechter, consultation game, Vienna 1903 — which Schlechter himself doesn’t mention. However, 12...Qxd4!? prevents 0-0-0 and throws a spanner in the works! A 1995 IECG email game J.Claridge-P.Cody

continued 13 Rd1 Qc5 14 Nd5 Nbd7 (14...Bg7 also looks critical.) and now White played 15 Be5?, losing quickly, but after the superior 15 Be3 it seems Black probably has equality and maybe an immediate draw if he wants one (15...Qa5+ 16 Bd2 Qc5 17 Be3 repetition). So it would seem that 8...dxe4 is not that easy to refute after all; maybe White can play something else at move 9?

Now I return to 8...Nf6.

9 Nc3

Estrin and Glazkov also suggest 9 Be2!? and this may be better. Since White did not play Nc3 at move 7, why play it now and encourage the coming pin?

9...Bb4!

If Black wanted to take on e4, he should have done it last move.

10 Be2?!

White is aiming his Bishop at the g4-pawn but e4 is conceded. Estrin and Glazkov's main line, this is the only move mentioned in the 1922 *Handbuch*.

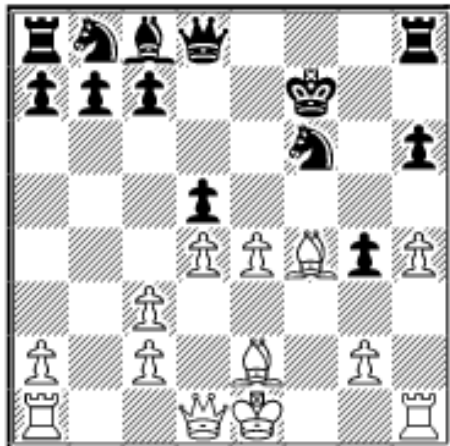
Instead, I think White should support e4 by 10 Bd3!?, as played by Vidmar and others. That would transpose to the line considered at the end of this article.

10...Bxc3+

10...Be6 is too slow. W.Gudehus-J.Dimer, corr 1898 continued, 11 0–0 Bxc3 12 Be5! Nbd7 13 Bxf6 Nxf6 14 e5 Bb4 15 Rxf6+ Ke7 16 Bxg4 Bd7 17 Qf3 Qg8 18 Bxd7 Kxd7 19 Rf7+ Kc8 20 c3 Ba5 21 Qxd5 Bb6 22 e6 Qe8 23 Raf1 c6 24 Qd6 1–0. If instead 11...Ke7, Dimer said White would win by 12 e5 Ne4 13 Nxe4 dxe4 14 c3 Ba5 15 Bxg4

Bc4 16 Qd2 e.g. 16...Bxf1 17 Bg5+ hxd5 18 Qxd5+ Ke8 19 Qg6+ Ke7 20 Qe6+ Kf8 21 Rxf1+ Kg7 22 Rf7+ Kg8 23 Qg6 mate.

11 bxc3



“In this critical position,” comment Estrin and Glazkov, “Black still has his extra piece, but the insecure position of his King gives White good chances for continuing his attack.” After giving two favourable continuations for White (after 11...Kg6 and 11...dxe4), they conclude: “In spite of the

extensive practical material available, at present it is difficult to answer the question as to how Black can refute White’s bold opening idea”.

Surprisingly, they don’t mention that Black can also play 11...Nc6 transposing to Glazkov-Soloviev (see above). This would be (yet again!) the main line of the Hampe-Allgaier; there is just no getting away from it!

However, in the present position it looks as if there is an even stronger move for Black, mentioned in no book that I have seen:

11...Nxe4!

Why not? It’s a sign of the increasing computerisation of CC that pawns are being grabbed which in the old days would have been rejected because of "human" inhibitions.

12 0-0

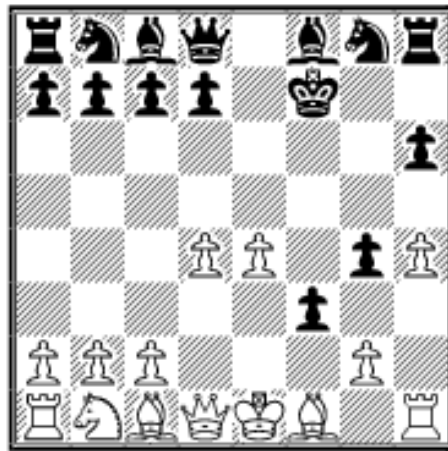
12 Bxg4 Bxg4 13 Qxg4 Nf6 seems worse.

12...Kg6! 13 Bxg4 Qxh4

This is why it was better for Black to take on e4 with the Knight rather than the pawn. Where is White's compensation now? Black soon won in J.K.MacDonald-J.Canibal, Reg Gillman Memorial 'E' corr 1999.

In view of this, 9 Bd3 must be better than 9 Be2, but even if that is viable, Black has another possibility. (1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7)

7 d4 f3!



If 7 d4 d5 is problematic for White, it is even harder to find any good news for the first player now.

8 Be3!?

We are following the recent "bible", *Nunn's Chess Openings* (NCO), which makes short shrift

of the Allgaier Gambit. It is relegated by GM Gallagher, who was responsible for the page in question, to a 3-line note (note 6 on page 296). He admits that White may get compensation in the 7...d5 line but instead tells Black to meet 7 d4 by 7...f3! 8 Bc4+ d5 9 Bxd5+ Kg7 (transposing to Levin-Bilenkin above) 10 gxf3 Nf6 11 Nc3 Bb4 with clear advantage to Black. The point is that after 7 d4 f3 White has nothing better than to go into the main line of 7 Bc4+ which we have already shown to be no good.

However, NCO does not mention White's better try, 7 Nc3.

Turning to the American "bible", GM Nick de Firmian's 14th edition of *Modern Chess Openings* I again find that

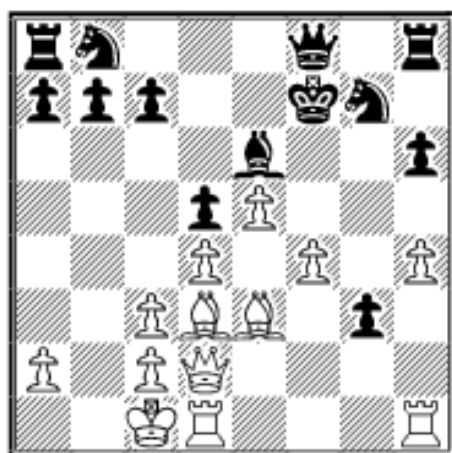
only three lines of text are offered — and the recommendation is different. This section of the book was contributed by IM Elliott Winslow and US National Master Stephen Brandwein.

To my surprise, they recommend Black to meet 5 Ng5 by Ponziani's old 5...d5, giving the continuation 6 d4 f6 7 Nh3 f3 8 Nf4 dxe4 (Monin-Korolev, corr 1986-88) as good for Black, but not saying how Black should meet 6 exd5. I shall be looking at the 5...d5 line in detail next month.

There is a reason why Winslow/ Brandwein/DeFirmian reject the recommendation of Gallagher/Nunn. Instead of 8 Bc4+, MCO says "8 Be3 d5 9 Nc3 is not so clear". So even the experts cannot agree on the best way to meet the Allgaier!

However, I could only find one example of the MCO suggestion and it was not all that encouraging. A 1990 postal game between two amateurs, V.Lychkov-Petrov, now went (after 7 d4 f3 8 Be3 d5 9 Nc3):

9...Bb4 10 gxf3 g3 11 Qd2 Nf6 12 0-0-0 Bxc3 13 bxc3 Qf8 14 Bd3 Be6 15 e5 Nh5 16 f4 Ng7



Here White gives it his best shot.

17 f5!?! Nxf5 18 Rdf1 Ke8 19 Kb1

He would have done better to try 19 Rhg1.

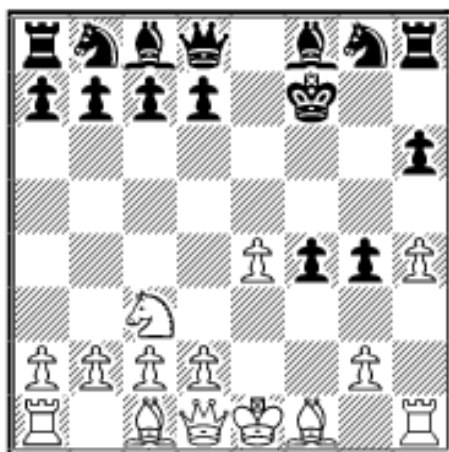
19...Nc6 20 Rxf5?

This is unsound. Black refuted it as follows:

20...Bxf5 21 Rf1 Ne7 22 Bxf5 Nxf5 23 Qd3 Nxe3 24

Rxf8+ Rxf8 25 Qxe3 g2! 0–1.

Having eliminated the alternatives, we are left with the conclusion that **7 Nc3** is critical.



Now defences based on ...d5 in reply to a Bishop check might be dubious, because White would be able to capture on d5 with a Knight, threatening a discovered check.

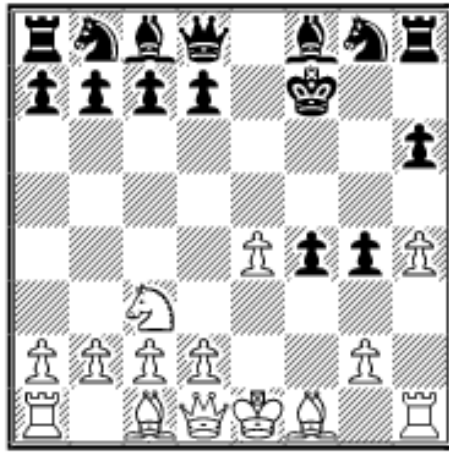
Thus in reply to 7 Nc3, Black can still play 7...f3 but it is not so clear-cut. 7...f3 is "a logical move, breaking up White's kingside" remarked Estrin & Glazkov, but it is stronger against 7 d4 than against 7 Nc3. White has an extra piece developed and may not want to play d4 in a hurry, especially as Black is giving away the pawn on f3 instead of f4.

White can reply 8 gxf3! e.g. 8...Be7 9 Bc4+ d5 10 Nxd5! Bxh4+ 11 Kf1 Kg7 and now either 12 d3 c6 13 Nf4 (unclear in Jasinski-Szczepaniak, Poland corr 1995-97) or 12 f4 trying to set up a steamroller of central pawns. Both 12 d3 and 12 f4 were Keres suggestions at one time.

I shall finish this month's column with an example of 7 Nc3.

Miroslaw Jasinski – Jerzy Koralewski Final of 39th Polish Corr Championship 1996-98 [Jasinski/ Harding etc]

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ng5?! h6 6 Nxf7 Kxf7 7 Nc3!



This move was apparently once recommended by Keres and it has been attributed to Blackburne. It was forgotten for many years, e.g., Korchnoi & Zak's book only considered 7 Qxg4, 7 d4 and 7 Bc4+ here. I doubt that Keres was very convinced by the move since it is not mentioned at all in the last (1971 Sportverlag) edition of his work on open games, *Zweispringerspiel bis Königsgambit*.

7...Nf6

7...Nc6 transposes to the Hampe-Allgaier Gambit, to be discussed next month.

7...d5 (not waiting for White to give a Bishop check) 8 d4 (Estrin & Glazkov) 8...f3 9 Nxd5 Nf6, as recommended by GM Neil McDonald, is also a critical line to be examined next time.

7...d6 has also been seen in some correspondence games. An example is 8 Bc4+ Kg7 9 d3 Be7 10 Bxf4 Bxh4+ 11 g3 Bg5 12 Qd2 Bxf4 13 Qxf4 Nf6 14 0-0-0 Nc6 15 d4 Qe7 16 Rde1 Na5 17 Bd3 Qf7 18 Ref1 Qe6 19 e5 dxe5 20 dxe5 Nd7 21 Rh5 Nf8 22 Rg5+ (better 22 Rf5) 22...hxg5 23 Qxg5+ Ng6 24 Bxg6 Qxg6 25 Qe7+ 1-0 T.Stock-P.Kurscheidt, 1993.

8 d4 d5 9 Bxf4 Bb4 10 Bd3!

10 Be2 transposes to the line considered above under 7 d4, where Black can follow MacDonald-Canibal by capturing on c3 and then on e4 with the Knight.

10...dxe4

Or 10...Bxc3+ 11 bxc3 and now:

a) 11...Nxe4 12 0-0 transposes to Vidmar-Goldsand, Vienna 1902: 12...Kg6 13 Qe2 (with definite compensation) 13...Bf5? 14 Be5 Rf8 15 Rxf5! Rxf5 16 Qxg4+ and White soon won.

b) 11...dxe4 12 Bc4+ Kg7 13 0-0 Nbd7 14 Be5 Kh7 15 Qe2 c6 16 Rf4 b5 17 Raf1 Rf8 18 Bb3 Qe7 19 Rxe4 Nd5 20 Bf4 Qg7 21 Bxd5 cxd5 22 Re7 Rf7 23 Rxf7 Qxf7 24 Bg3 Qg7 25 Qd3+ Kg8 26 Qxb5 Nf6 27 Qc6 Bb7 28 Qxf6 and White won the ending in J.B.Claridge-H.Daurelle, IECG 1999.

11 Bc4+ Kg7 12 0-0 Nc6 13 d5 Bxc3 14 bxc3 Ne7

14...Na5 may be better.

15 Be5 Rf8 16 h5! Neg8 17 Qd4 Qe8 18 Qxe4

18 d6!? was another possibility.

18...Qxh5 19 Bd3 Rf7 20 Rxf6! Nxf6

If 20...Rxf6 21 Qh7+ Kf8 22 Bxf6 Nxf6 23 Rf1.

21 Rf1 g3 22 Qh7+ Kf8 23 Qh8+ Ke7 24 Bxf6+ Kd6 25 Be5+ Kxd5 26 Bxg3 Rxf1+ 27 Bxf1 Ke6 28 Bc4+ Ke7 29 Qd4! Bg4 30 Bxc7 1-0

Conclusion

After looking at all these lines in which White has fair chances, it may be concluded that the Allgaier Gambit is really quite dangerous, even in the 21st century — especially in rapid/blitz play and to opponents below 2200 standard. On the other hand, if White does not play the most promising continuation, he can soon be quite lost — and there are some strong moves (for both sides) which you

won't find in the books.

You may argue, "since 5 Ne5" is known to be best, why play an inferior move?. Against that — especially in blitz and rapid chess — there is the element of surprise, of getting your opponent into unfamiliar territory and the nervous fear he may get with his king so exposed and no theory to fall back on.

I realise that those of you who might face this gambit with Black, would like some tips. Next month we shall look at other defences against the Allgaier. Until then, you might like to examine 5...Nf6.

Study Material

I have compiled a database of more than 350 Allgaier Gambit games which can be downloaded from my website. At present only some games, relevant to the present column, are posted, but after next month's column is published I will put up the complete database for a while.

The URL is: <http://www.chessmail.com/games/freegames.html> .

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